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THE MOAT HOUSE MYSTERY.

CHAPTER I.

PINFORD STATION is less than fourteen miles from Euston Square; and that comparatively little-known stretch of field and wood of which Pinford Hill is the centre is but a mile and a half from Pinford Station.

On a certain Thursday afternoon at the end of May, 188–, a young girl might have been seen sitting on a camp-stood beneath a clump of beeches on the nothern brow of the lovely Pinford Hill, while before her on a portable easel rested a half-finished water-color sketch of the beautiful landscape that lay at her feet, all its tints enriched by the glowing sunshine.

The girl was May Bramber, the only child of Horace Bramber of the Moat House in Pinford Wood hard by. She had been painting, as the wet brushes which she still held testified; but her attention had gradually been withdrawn from her Bristol board and her moist colors, and she leaned back, apparently absorbed in a very pleasant day-dream.

Less than a week previously her Cousin Mark had asked her to become his wife, and ever since she had not been quite mistress of herself. She was only nineteen, and this was the first time that love had revealed itself as a living reality to her, and there was not much room in her foolish little heart for thoughts of anything else. She had no claim to be pitied however, for Mark Bramber, her lover, was in every respect an eligible suitor.

Horace Bramber and his elder brother Peter, Mark's father, were the chief partner in that remarkably flourishing firm Bramber Brothers & Co. Both of them were widowers. Peter, with his only child Mark, lived near Regent's Park, yet declared that he cordially detested London; and Horace resided at the Moat House, yet lost no opportunity of expressing his extreme dislike to the country. There was evidently not much sincerity in the assertions of the two brothers upon these points; for Peter and Horace, had they been so minded, could, without any grave inconvenience, have exchanged residences. Peter however often spent a few days very happily with Horace at Pinford; and Horace quite as often billeted himself for one or two nights upon Peter in London. Indeed these visits were on both sides so frequent that at each house a bedroom was always ready for the absent brother; and in the cupboards and drawers of each of these bed-rooms the respective visitors kept supplies to render it unnecessary ever to carry any luggage backwards and forwards with them.

May Bramber continued dreaming until a distant church clock struck four. The mellow peaceful sound roused her from her reverie; and, hastily gathering her painting materials together, she fastened a strap round them, and turned slowly towards the stile of the field in which she had been sitting.

A ten minutes' walk along a woodland road brought her to a path that branched off to the left and led across a little white bridge beneath which scores of lilies lay floating motionless in the water. It was this piece

of water that gave the name to Horace Bramber's quaint old tree-embowered house, which became visible to May as soon as she set foot upon the springy lawn, the smooth green grass of which grew up to the very edge of the shallow moat. The cottage—for it was but little more—was low and straggling, with a mossy picturesque roof, and around the windows and the porch there were some curious bits of wood-carving, grotesque and weather-stained, that had probably been there in sunshine and in rain ever since the days when Cardinal Wolsey kept great state at Headstone, a couple of miles away towards Ploughborough.

May entered the house by an open window and disappeared. A quarter of an hour afterwards two old gentlemen also crossed the little white bridge, beyond which was a private pathway into the grounds provided with a gate which was never by any chance locked. These two old gentleman were Peter and Horace Bramber. Long before they reached the door of the Moat House May ran out from her window to meet them, her face radiant with joy.

"Your uncle had made up his mind to go to Scotland to-night," said Horace, when he had kissed his daughter; "but I persuaded him that he might just as well wait until to-morrow."

"And I have consented, provided that you treat me properly," added Peter; "but, if you can't give me a good dinner, why, I can go back to the station and get to Tylerford in time to catch the mail, I dare say."

"I won't starve you," said May, laughing; "and I know that papa has ordered some more of that malmsey which you like so much."

"Has it come, May?" asked Horace.

"I don't know. I have been out sketching all the afternoon; but I suppose it has."

"Well, well, even if there is no malmsey," said Horace, "there is some dinner, no doubt."

"And perhaps I am not quite so greedy as I make myself out to be," observed Peter, as he pinched May's cheek affectionately. "You haven't asked after Mark, young woman."

"Oh, how is Mark?" inquired May awkwardly. Since her engagement she had found herself incapable of mentioning that young gentleman's name without feeling uncomfortable.

"He is very well; and you may expect him down on Saturday. He says that he is coming to play tennis; but I believe he has a very different purpose in view."

"You are always fond of teasing!" exclaimed May, who was by this time herself again. "Still Mark is coming to play tennis; and, if he doesn't play tennis, I don't know what else he will find to do, unless he angles for gold-fish in the moat, for there will be twenty or thirty people here."

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" said Peter, with mock ceremony. "Of course, if there are to be twenty or thirty people here, I apologize, especially as I can't afford to quarrel with the housekeeper."

"Let us have some tea now, May," cried Horace, as he entered the house with his brother. "We'll come out for it, if you will tell Welsh to put some chairs for us under the sycamore."

Horace always called for tea directly he returned from his almost daily visit to London; and, when the weather was not too cold, he liked to have it in the garden. Welsh, the butler, therefore was already prepared; and in a few minutes chairs and a tea-table were set out in the cool shade at the edge of the moat.

No one quite understood why James Welsh was retained in Horace Bramber's service. As there was only one male indoor servant kept at the Moat House, people were rather surprised that such a practical person as Mr. Bramber had not chosen an active man. For James Welsh was almost a cripple. One of his legs was shorter than the other, and in consequence moved about clumsily and not without difficulty. Yet he knew his work, and, in his rather awkward way, did it well. He was not perhaps a paragon of honesty, nor could he justly be called a household treasure, for he had a weakness for peculation and an undue liking for draught beer; but butlers are seldom perfect, and Horace Bramber might have had a far less desirable man than Welsh to wait upon him.

May took a seat under the sycamore; and, when the brothers had changed their coats and made themselves comfortable, they joined her.

A stranger, looking at them as they strolled side by side across the lawn, would not readily have realized that they were brothers. Peter, the elder, was a short dark-complexioned man whose shaven face was well wrinkled, but whose hair was still

so black and glossy that it might easily have been mistaken for a wig. His eyes, which were bright, had an almost boyish twinkle of fun and mischief in them; and, although he was nearly seventy, he was upright and brisk. Horace, who was Peter's junior by ten years, was tall and slight, and his hair and whiskers were perfectly white. He had not such fine eyes as Peter; but on the other hand, he had a far fresher complexion and fewer wrinkles. Indeed, remembering that his liver was supposed to be affected and that he was certainly quick-tempered, the clearness of his skin was astonishing. Possibly his liver was not solely to blame for his hot temper, because Peter, the healthiness of whose liver was unimpeachable, was also what his son Mark called "peppery."

The trio sat together in the garden for a couple of hours. Peter Bramber was in high spirits. He liked the prospect of the approaching marriage of his only son to his only niece; and when May went indoors to dress for dinner he began to talk to his brother about the settlements.

"I have the largest share in the business," he said, "so there is no reason why I should not do things handsomely."

"I intend to give May eight hundred a year," rejoined Horace; "and, if you give Mark an equal sum, they will have more than enough to begin housekeeping upon."

"Tut, man!" objected Peter. "You need not put your hand into your pocket at all. Indeed I won't allow it! Why should I? I am the elder brother and the richer, and pretty girls don't want dowries. You think that they ought to have sixteen hundred a year? Very well! I'll give Mark eight hundred, and settle another eight hundred on May; but they sha'n't have a penny from you, Horace, while you are alive. It is not your business to support my son's wife."

Peter Bramber meant all this in the kindliest way; but Horace's pride had been aroused. And thus it happened that when Welsh came to take away the tea-tray the two old gentlemen were raising their voices in hot argument, and might have been supposed to be on the worst terms with each other.

During dinner there was not much conversation between the two men. Horace tried to make peace by offering his brother some of his favorite malmsey; but Welsh announced that the case which had been ordered from London had not yet arrived, and the modest overture was a dismal failure. After dinner, when May had quitted the dining-room, the unwelcome topic of the settlements was again discussed. Peter grew indignant because Horace would not permit him to give May eight hundred a year; and Horace grew angry because he fancied that his brother wanted to treat him like a pauper. The two men could not therefore come to an agreement. On the contrary, the longer they argued the question the more they disagreed with each other; and at last, after delivering himself of a rather hot speech about "the confounded pride of some people," Peter tossed off his port, rose from his chair with an indignant air, and said:—

"I sha'n't stay here to-night Horace. I shall go to Scotland. Perhaps when I next see you you will be more reasonable."

Horace did not reply immediately; and while he sat scowling at the carpet Welsh came in.

Seeing that something unpleasant had happened, the lame butler immediately withdrew; but, almost before he could close the door, Horace blurted out angrily, "Go then!" whereupon Peter, without another word, followed Welsh out of the room.

Horace testily took up a cigar, and, having lighted it, he strolled aimlessly to the French window which opened on to the lawn. He drew aside the curtains. Without, the moon shone brightly, and, tempted by the cool look of the shady garden, he pushed open the window.

"He won't go to-night," muttered Horace, "it isn't worth his while to quarrel; but, as for giving way in this matter—well, I never will!" And, puffing his cigar viciously, he went out, closing the window after him.

Meanwhile May Bramber sat at the piano in the drawing-room. She sang softly, and accompanied herself; but she was thinking, not of the song before her, but of her Cousin Mark. Thus, enjoyed, she forgot how the time was passing, until the clock on the bracket at her side struck ten.

"Why, where can papa and uncle be?" she exclaimed suddenly. "They must have gone to sleep in their chairs." And with her natural impetuosity she ran out of the room to look after them. But, finding no one in the dining-room, she returned, and once more sat down at the piano. "I suppose," she said to herself, "they have gone out for a stroll."

For more than half an hour longer she dreamed over her songs, the words of most of which seemed to her mind to be strangely applicable to Mark and herself. Suddenly she was startled by hearing a rap at the window. The sound almost frightened her, disturbing so suddenly and completely the current of her thoughts; but in a moment she saw that her father was standing outside in the moonlight and beckoning to her to let him in. She did so at once.

"Why, papa," she cried, "what is the matter with you? You are nearly covered with mud!"

Horace Bramber staggered to a chair, apparently half dazed.

"I have had a fall," he said abruptly. "I stumbled down the steps of the terrace. It was all my fault. I was not looking where I was going."

"But how pale you are!" she returned, kneeling for a moment at his feet, and then, rising again anxiously, she added, "I'll go and get you some brandy; or I'll ring for Welsh;" and she rang the bell.

Unwilling to exhibt her father in his muddy and untidy condition to the servants, she gave her orders to Welsh at the door, and received from him what she required. Welsh however did not fail to notice that something unusual has happened; for he was of an inquisitive nature, and but few things escape his sharp eyes.

"And where is Uncle Peter?" asked May, when her father had revived somewhat.

"Your uncle?" said Horace vaguely. "Why, has he gone? He said he was going. Didn't he come in to bid you good-by?"

"Good-by? No! I thought that he was going to stay to-night."

Horace was silent.

"Has he really gone then?" demanded May.

"I suppose so," replied her father. "He said that he thought he would go on to Scotland to-night. He had altered his mind. I dare say that he intended to catch the mail at Tylerford."

May was too uneasy about her father to question him further concerning her uncle, whose ways she knew were eccentric.

"Well," she said, "you must go to bed, papa, dear; and you must not walk at night in the garden by yourself. I could have come with you. Do you feel better?"

"Yes—much better," answered Horace, who was still pale and nervous; and, rising with an effort, he kissed his daughter affectionately, and bade her good night.

CHAPTER II.

HORACE BRAMBER had breakfast in bed the next morning, as he felt too stiff and unwell to get up. May went to see him, and found him rather testy, for he did not like being confined to his room. He did not want her, he said. He would come down later in the day and sit in the garden; meanwhile he would try to go to sleep.

Peter Bramber had evidently departed overnight. His bed-room had not been occupied; and presumably he had, in accordance with his expressed intention, caught the Scotch mail-train. Horace did not make any further inquiries about him.

May was accustomed to be by herself during the greater part of every day. She generally spent much of her leisure sketching and painting in the Pinford Woods; but on that morning, while her father lay up-stairs, she did not like to venture far away from the house—he might call her; she therefore arranged her drawing-materials on the lawn, and in a cosey nook by the moat set to work to paint a curious old carved porch that overshadowed the back-door. Its rough oaken tracery was almost covered with budding clematis; on the adjacent trellised wall grew a knotted vine of patriarchal age, and over a neighboring chimney-stack climbed an untidy wistaria. She could not have found a more picturesque corner had she walked fifty miles in search of one.

From May's shady seat the whole of the ancient house was visible. In front of the door lay a large irregular court-yard paved with cobble-stones, from between which some fine bantams were busily picking up the relics of the last banquet that had been cast to them by their friend and patron the cook. The bantams were inclined to be quarrelsome, and in due course two cocks commenced fighting for the possession of a particularly choice morsel of food. One of the combatants soon swallowed the dainty at the imminent risk of choking himself; and the other, thus deprived of the prize, grew so infuriated that May was on the point of rising to put an end to the struggled, when the rapid approach of a covered cart drove away the birds.

The cart belonged to Sykes, the Pinford

carrier, who three times every week made a journey to London, and on the intervening days occupied himself in the delivery of heavy parcels that had come by train to Pinford Station, and had been deposited there for lack of further means of conveyance. This Friday was one of the days on which Sykes did not go to London, and he appeared at the Moat House with three large case of the wonderful malmsey which ought to have arrived the night before.

Sykes knocked at the back-door, and, when he had told the cook what he had brought, she shrilly summoned Welsh, the butler, to unload and take charge of the consignment. They were heavy four-dozen cases, each one almost as much as old Sykes and lame Welsh could move by their united efforts. After a quarter of an hour's hard labor however the boxes were dragged down into the cellar, and Sykes, having been hospitably regaled by the cook with a tankard of ale, drove away.

Welsh reported the arrival to his young mistress.

"The malmsey has come, miss!" he said. "Shall I open it and pack it away in the old bins, miss? I think there will be time before luncheon."

May told him to do as he suggested, and then went on quietly with her painting, until, about an hour later, her father, looking rather white and shaky, went out to her and took a seat at her side.

"That was a nasty fall I had last night, May," he said. "I haven't felt so stiff for the last twenty years. I'm quite shaken; but I'm better now, and I hope that there won't be any permanent ill effects."

"You must have been very stupid, papa," returned May, laughing, "to tumble down those steps which you know so well! You nearly frightened me out of my wits! I imagined that some one had been knocking you down and trying to rob you."

"Well, well," said Horace, "don't tell every one how stupid I have been, or people will begin to think that I am getting old."

At that moment a terrible shriek came from the house, speedily followed by confused cries of terror and dismay. Before May could rise, the cook rushed from the back-door, and beckoning wildly, shouted:—

"Oh, come, sir, for heaven's sake! James is took awful, sir—he's dying, I do believe! Come, sir—come, Miss May!" and then the good woman rapidly re-entered the house.

Mr. Bramber and May followed the cook without any unnecessary delay into the kitchen, upon the floor of which lay Welsh, the butler, foaming at the mouth, struggling with some imaginary enemy, and evidently very ill indeed.

"It looks like epilepsy," said Horace. "We must put him to bed. One of you girls had better go at once for the doctor. Cook and I can do all that is needful until he comes."

"I'm afraid," ventured May, "that those great cases of wine were too much for his strength. I saw him helping Sykes with them a couple of hours ago, and at the time I thought that James was over-exerting himself, poor fellow!"

Mr. Bramber and the cook succeeded in carrying Welsh up-stairs and in putting him to bed. Then, when he had done everything that a very slight knowledge of medicine suggested to him, Horace left the sufferer, and, much fatigued himself, rejoined May, who had gone anxiously into the conservatory.

"Really," he said, "the man almost looks as if he were mad, his eyes glare so. I can't imagine what is the matter with him. He shrinks from me too, and implores me to 'take it away,' whatever 'it' may be. I believe he is mad."

"Oh, papa, don't say so! Let us hope that he will soon get better. Depend upon it that Doctor Plover will tell us that it is nothing very serious."

"I fancy Welsh drinks too much," observed Horace Bramber. "Perhaps this is some strange development of delirium tremens. But he certainly didn't smell of drink."

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed May. "But here is Doctor Plover. Go up with him, papa, and hear what he has to say.

Mr. Bramber went with the doctor to the butler's room. Plover at once pronounced that the man was suffering from the effects of a severe fright. But it was impossible to discover the exact cause of the excitement. The patient either could not or would not give any explanation. He only shrunk fearfully from his master and exclaimed repeatedly, in accents of the greatest terror:—

"Oh, take it away—take it away!"

In about an hour's time however, he had partially recovered, and then he tried, although he was still evidently much excited,

to laugh the matter off. He declared to Doctor Plover that he was subject to fits of the kind, and that they caused him to take a violent antipathy to certain people. In this instance he had experienced a feeling of aversion to Mr. Horace Bramber. He could not, he said, account for it, nor could he overcome it.

The doctor recommended him to remain in his room for the rest of the day, and, having written a prescription, departed, confident that Welsh was on the high-road to complete recovery, but much mystified as to the cause and nature of the attack, about which he determined to write a long letter to the *Lancet*. At Doctor Plover's suggestion Horace Bramber did not again approach the invalid, who could be very well tended by the cook and the other servants; but the affair seemed to cast a strange gloom over the house, the master of which, whether in consequence of the stiffness caused by his own bruises or of the events of the morning, sat alone until dinner-time in the library, and after dinner returned thither, and went to sleep unsocially in his arm-chair.

Mr. Bramber was awakened somewhat roughly by the cook, who entered hurriedly, and, having aroused him, announced excitedly that Welsh had disappeared. Five minutes previously she had gone up into his room to take him some beef tea, and had found the bed empty. The butler's clothes and boots had vanished, and it was clear that he had suddenly left the house.

Mr. Bramber was at first too sleepy to pay much attention to what was told him, and it was not until the frightened cook almost shouted the intelligence in his ears that he realized what had happened.

"Well," he said, in a tone of annoyance, "I can't help it. Send the servants to look about the place for him, and let them take the stable lanterns. I suppose Welsh can take care of himself. I can do nothing," and he went to sleep again.

The cook, thus thrown upon her own resources, did her best. All the servants, male and female—for the gardener was specially summoned for the quest—sallied forth. Some carried pokers and other improvised weapons, fearful lest the missing butler, having gone out to commit suicide or with some equally fell purpose, might resent interference and turn upon the searchers. Others contented themselves with lanterns, but would not venture far. The search was a tolerable thorough one. Every corner of the premises was more or less carefully peered into; and at length it seemed to be reasonably certain that Welsh had quitted the precincts of the Moat House, the garden, and the grounds.

May, who during all this time was playing in the drawing-room, was not informed of what had happened. She went to bed, after having kissed her still slumbering father, and then the indomitable cook, armed with a rolling-pin, stole along the passage of the house, and saw carefully to the fastening of every door and shutter.

"If he's out," she muttered to herself, "let him stay out! It's the best place for the likes of him! We don't want any stark staring lunatics coming about here in the night and cutting our throats as we lie abed. Likely enough he's gone down to the "Queen's Head," which the landlord, I know, is a friend of his; but, as for coming back again this night, and us a parcel of defenceless women, with the master no more use than my mop, and not so much—no, he sha'n't, if I can prevent it!" with which remark the cook viciously double-bolted the last door and retired slowly to rest, feeling that upon her shoulders all the really weighty responsibilities of the household rested.

The clock in the far-off church tower struck the hour of midnight. Horace Bramber had not gone to bed for faint rays of light shone through the chinks of the library windows and fell upon the lawn outside. The night was very dark, and, although no rain had yet fallen, the clouds were gathering ominously overhead, and the wind sighed among the trees that stood close around the house.

One o'clock struck, and soon afterwards a door was quietly opened from within, and a black indistinct figure issued forth, and slowly, very slowly, made its way across the grass and into the shadow of the nearest shrubbery where it seemed to melt away and mingle with the gloom. The figure might have borne a heavy burden, for its gait was unsteady and laborious, and its outline irregular. In little more than half an hour it returned stealthily, re-entered the house silently, and closed and bolted the door behind it. Within the next five minutes the light in the library was extinguished, and shortly afterwards a lighted

candle in Horace Bramber's bed-room indicated that he was retiring to rest.

The buxom cook, in spite of her alarm, slept the sleep of the just. Horace Bramber did not sleep quite so soundly. His stiffness still troubled him, and he was not feeling by any means himself. May slept like a mouse in winter, though she dreamed for a time of her lover, Mark, whom she hoped to see on the morrow. Meanwhile the mild spring rain came down in the darkness, falling gently upon the young leaves and the fragrant black mold of the garden. It did the gardener good, as he lay in bed, to hear the drops pattering upon his window-pane. "It breaks up the soil beautiful," he thought to himself; "and that there patch as I digged to-day for the lettuces will be as smooth and nice as if I'd gone over it with the small rake. It won't look as if it had been fresh digged; and that's what I likes to see." And in the early morning, when he went to plant out his lettuces, he found the ground just as he had predicted. All traces of his spade had been beaten and washed away, and the bed was, as he expressed it, "a pictur'."

The Moat House people did not wake up until the industrious gardener was beginning to feel ready for his breakfast. Even the cook slept comparatively late. It was half-past seven before her kitchen fire was lighted, and nine o'clock had just struck when May appeared, fresh as a cowslip with the dew on it, in the dining-room. Her father sent down word to her that, as he would have to incur some fatigue in attending to his guests in the afternoon, he would not get up to breakfast. He was still feeling unwell, and would be glad if May would send him a cup of coffee and a piece of dry toast—nothing more.

"But where is Welsh?" asked May. "Isn't he well yet? I want him to take up father's tray."

"Please, miss," returned the housemaid, "Welsh went away all of a sudden last night and we don't know what's become of him."

"Then I will take up Mr. Bramber's breakfast, Mary," said May. "I hope that nothing has happened. Welsh certainly didn't seem able to take care of himself yesterday when he had that fit in the kitchen, poor fellow."

She found her father in dressing-gown and slippers. He was better, he said, but dreadfully stiff, and not quite the thing. He had heard about Welsh's disappearance; doubtless the man would turn up in the course of the day, unless indeed he had really gone out of his mind and wandered aimlessly away. May was not to worry about him.

Before many hours had elasped it was discovered that the butler had not wandered far. At mid-day the cook herself descended into the cellar to draw beer for the servants' dinner, and there, to her horror and disgust, she found Welsh lying on the ground "dead drunk," as she termed it, clutching an empty bottle which had contained malmsey, and surrounded by several others, some of which were broken. At the drunken man's side was a candlestick, the candle in which had burnt down and gone out. It was impossible to guess how much wine he had consumed, for all the empty bottles of the household were put away in this cellar; but he had evidently drank an enormous quantity, and wasted a great deal more. The twelve dozen of malmsey that had arrived on the previous day, were considerably reduced, the place was strewn with broken glass, and some of the bins of sherry had apparently been attacked, for at least one of the broken bottles contained a few drops of fine old Amontillado.

The cook indignantly summoned her master, who was by this time dressed. Horace Bramber once more sent for Doctor Plover. Welsh's case was evidently serious. The man, in addition to his more mysterious malady, was suffering severely from alcoholic poisoning, and the doctor had to adopt the most heroic form of treatment.

"It is just as I suspected," said Mr. Bramber. "The fellow has acquired a craving for drink, and has lost all command over himself. Yesterday's attack was delirium tremens. Don't tell me that it was fright! What had he to be frightened at, I should like to know? As soon as he can be moved he must go, well or ill. I won't have him here any longer."

It was very inconvenient that Welsh should thus fail on the very day of the tennis-party; but Miss Bramber and the maids did the best they could, May energetically manufacturing claret-cup and cutting sandwiches, and the women bustling about looking after other matters. Before the first guest arrived, the misfortunate butler, who had by that time partially recovered his senses, but was still very weak and strange

in his manner, was packed off, together with his boxes, and consigned to the care of his friend, the landlord of the "Queen's Head," in the village; and the cook glad to get rid of him, heaved a sigh of relief, and congratulated herself, that she had never, as at one time seemed likely, consented to become Mrs. Welsh.

Most of the guests came from London, and among the first to arrive was Mark Bramber. May managed to meet him at the gate at a moment when no one else was within sight, and, although Mark had come down only to play tennis, he did not seem to be in a great hurry to put on his flannels and mix with the little crowd upon the lawn. On the contrary, he betrayed such a tendency to loiter with May in the more secluded part of the garden, that she was at last forced to remind him that she had to fulfill her duties as hostess.

"Glad to see you, Mark," said Horace Bramber. Have you heard from your father yet? We expected that he would sleep here on Thursday night; but he left us rather abruptly after dinner, and, I suppose, caught the night-mail to Scotland."

"No, I haven't heard from him, uncle," returned Mark, "but he is a very bad correspondent, you know. It is true that he is not often away for long at a time, yet I don't think that he has done me the honor of writing to me more than once during the last three years. I treasure that unique epistle as a curiosity."

Horace laughed, but his laugh was not spontaneous, for he was still suffering from the stiffness caused by his fall on Thursday night.

"I hope that nothing has happened to him," he said, "it was very dark when he left here. I went out soon afterwards, and had a bad tumble, as I dare say, May has told you. But, Mark, don't waste the time of all these people. Get up a set, there's a good fellow, and put them at their ease. And, remember, I strictly forbid your chattering to May. You must help me to do the work of host."

The lawn had been already marked out by the gardener, and in a few minutes play had begun on three courts, two of the players at the most remote and secluded end of the ground being Mark and May, who had for their opponents Mr. Gargoyle, the dapper little curate of Pinford, and a young lady from London, to whom he was paying unmistakable attentions. On this court play proceeded very slowly. Sometimes it was interrupted for a whole minute by a half-whispered confabulation—presumably about some point of the game—between Mark and May, or between Mr. Gargoyle and Miss Churchley; and it was noticeable that, whenever one of these couples found it necessary thus secretly to hold a council of war; the other did likewise. The consequence was that the set was a long one. At last, when both sides were exactly equal and victory seemed to be within the grasp of either, Mark and Mr. Gargoyle had a grand rally, the girls by common consent standing aside and allowing their champions to settle the matter between them. Again and again did the white ball fly backwards and forwards between the indefatigable curate and Mark, and the contest had become in the highest degree exciting, when Mr. Gargoyle, in his anxiety and nervousness miscalculated his stroke and sent the ball humming far over Mark's head into a rhododendron bed beyond.

May could not repress a little cry of triumph, and with Mark, she ran into the shrubbery to search for the ball; while Mr. Gargoyle and Miss Churchley sauntered away together to a table on which light refreshments were temptingly set out.

As the discovery of the ball lying in the depths of the tolerably thick shrubbery depended upon the efforts of two people who were very much in love with each other, it was delayed for an unconscionable time. There was, in fact, a good deal of make-believe about this search, and very little reality. Mark could not have seriously expected to find the ball, for instance, in May's eyes; and May could not have thought that she was likely to discover it hanging from Mark's watch-chain or perched upon his shoulder. Nevertheless the pair made a great show of bustling about among the bushes, and at last, when some meddlesome person approached, they separated and really began to hunt in earnest.

Suddenly Mark, looking very pale, and trembling violently, came out of the shrubbery and called excitedly to May to follow him.

"Something terrible has happened," he whispered to her—"something too terrible for me to tell you about! I must speak to your father—these people must be sent away. Go, May, and tell Uncle Horace to

come to me here. Don't alarm any one. Speak to him privately."

While May, wondering what could have happened, hurried away quickly, Mark went to a table and drank hastily two or three glasses of the strongest liquor he could find there.

"What can it mean?" he murmured painfully to himself. "What can it mean? Good heavens, I can hardly believe it, although I have seen it. And here, too!"

He feared that his heart would stop beating, but the wine revived him; and, when his uncle approached, he met him, still pale and trembling, but to some extent master of his emotions.

May lingered near, but Mark signed her to retire, and then, taking his uncle by the coat sleeve, he whispered a few words to him and led him into the shrubbery.

Almost immediately the guests who were congregated at the other end of the lawn were startled by hearing a hoarse and bitter cry. The voice was that of Horace Bramber, and the words, uttered in a tone of terror and anguish, were:—

"Heaven forgive me!"

At the same moment Mark sprang out from among the bushes, authoritatively waving back the people. His manner was strange, almost wild, and approaching the nearest guest, who happened to be Mr. Gargoyle, he said hastily:—

"Something most serious has happened! My uncle is ill. Please send every one away, and oblige me by asking Doctor Plover to come here without a moment's delay. I can't explain anything now. Say that my uncle is ill; and for heaven's sake, keep May out of the way! Take her into the house and get the place cleared quickly."

Mr. Gargoyle, who was a mild and an obedient man, had no time to ask questions, for Mark promptly ran back again to the shrubbery. The curate therefore fulfilled his commission to the best of his ability, hurried away the astonished guests, made some one promise to run for the doctor, delivered May into the custody of the cook, and then, finding himself alone with Miss Churchley, kissed her, told her not to be alarmed, offered her his arm, and bore her away with him towards the village, where she had friends, and whither her neglectful chaperon, Mrs. Carmby, had preceded her.

Pinford was excited as it had never perhaps been excited before. What mysterious affair could have happened to cause all this commotion? Speculation of all kinds was rife. Some said that Mark had murdered his uncle, others that Horace Bramber had attempted to take Mark's life, yet others that the elder man had fallen dead from heart-disease, and others again that he had had a fit of apoplexy. Doctor Plover sprang on his mare, and galloped off with commendable speed to the Moat House. Mr. Gargoyle timidly invited Mrs. Carmby and Miss Churchley to have tea with him at his rooms, and there to await events; and most of the guests made their way to the station, feeling personally angry with Mark for having spoilt a pleasant afternoon's enjoyment, and fully assured that the whole affair was a case of much ado about nothing.

In the meantime Mark, still terribly agitated, had carried his uncle into the house and laid him upon a sofa in the library. Horace Bramber was suffering from some kind of fit, and was breathing stertorously. He lay perfectly senseless and motionless; and May, who was not permitted to go near him, but who could hear her father's rasping labored respiration, stood waiting outside his door. By Mark's orders the gardener, who was an old and trusted servant, kept guard in the garden, and prevented any one from going near the fatal shrubbery; but as soon as the young man had satisfied himself, that pending the arrival of the doctor, he could do nothing more for his uncle, he took the gardener's place, and sent the man with a hastily-scrawled note to the village police-station, instructing him to deliver it to the serjeant in charge.

Pinford is a quiet and law-abiding place, and usually the local policeman do little else but walk about "swishing" nettles with their sticks, and occasionally making love to favored cooks and housemaids whom they encounter on their rounds. Mark's note therefore produced upon the serjeant much the same effect as the news of a thumping legacy from an unknown person might be expected to produce upon a penniless young bachelor. The officer, burning to distinguish himself, took the shortest woodland path to the Moat House, and owing to his unusual alacrity, entered the grounds by one gate just as Doctor Plover, on his mare, was entering them by another.

The two men, met by the hall door.

"What—you here!" exclaimed the doctor. "What's the matter, Brown?"

"'Taint perfesshernal, sir, to talk about my business," answered the policeman, mysteriously, "but I make no doubt as Mr. Mark Bramble, who is hear, will tell you everything as soon as ever you see him. It's a great responsibility, sir, to have family secrets piled up upon the likes of us."

"Indeed!" returned Doctor Plover, abruptly. "Then you had better hold my horse while I go and see Mr. Mark."

The serjeant looked rather disappointed at not being promptly accepted as a colleague by the doctor, but his dissatisfaction disappeared when Mark himself, who had been watching on the other side of the house, came round a corner, evidently pleased that his summonses had been so quickly responded to."

"Thank you, doctor—and you serjeant," he said. "I think I should like to have a word with you, Doctor Plover, first; but don't go away serjeant, and oblige me by seeing that no one enters the garden. I will explain everything to you in a few minutes."

While Doctor Plover and Mark entered the house, Serjeant Brown resignedly walked the doctor's mare up and down the drive, confident that the time would come when he too should have his day, and not be second in importance even to the brusque medical man.

Doctor Plover saw Horace Bramber, and pronounced that he was undoubtedly suffering from an attack of apoplexy.

"It is very strange," he said, "that yesterday the butler here had a fit, though it was of a somewhat different nature."

"Did he?" questioned Mark. "And where is he? I have not seen him today."

"They have sent him down to the "Queen's Head," in the village. It seems he got helplessly drunk as soon as he recovered sufficiently to be able to make his way to the cellar. But can you tell me what has brought on this attack? What has your uncle been doing? I hear there are all sorts of strange rumors in the village,"

Mark's self-possession almost forsook him.

"They have not got the truth, I hope," he gasped, "yet I suppose they must all know it sooner or later! Ah, doctor, it is indeed a dreadful business!"

"Well, what is it!" demanded Doctor Plover. "We can talk about it now. Your uncle can't understand us; and just at present I can do nothing more for him. What is it? You are looking very pale."

"It is this," moaned Mark, "that my dear father is lying dead here in the garden! I don't know how he has met with his death; furthermore, doctor, I fear to guess. And my uncle, when I showed him my father's body, fell senseless, as you see him now."

Doctor Plover was so shocked that for a few moments he could make no reply, then at last he stammered:—

"What! Your father—dead—here!"

"Can we leave him?" asked Mark pointing to his uncle. If so, I will show you."

Doctor Plover summoned the cook, gave her some brief directions, left her in charge of the patient, and followed Mark through the open window into the garden.

"Tie up the mare," said the doctor to Brown, who was not far away, "and come with us."

Mark led the way across the lawn, on which only an hour before he had been playing happily with May, and took his two companions into the midst of the rhododendron shrubbery. There, half covered wih earth, and lying in a shallow hole, was the body of Peter Bramber. Mark had been attracted by a piece of cloth which had protruded from the soil, and, upon pulling at it in order to see what it was, had laid bare the terrible spectacle.

The serjeant took out his note-book, and the doctor exclaimed sympathetically:—

"This is indeed dreadful!"

Mark, scarcely heeding either of them, said:—

"And now I want to know who has done this, and why my father, whom I believed to be in Scotland, is lying here dead—apparently murdered—in my uncle's garden."

"Hush!" murmured the doctor, who perceived the frightful direction in which the young man's suspicions drifted. "Let us first see whether it is really a case of murder;" and, bending down, he carefully examined the body.

Around the neck were bruises, which looked as if they had been caused by the violent pressure of fingers; the pockets had been rifled and turned inside out, and the clothes were much torn and damaged. Doctor Plover shook his head gravely.

"You had better send for a solicitor," he said, "and Serjeant Brown will communi-

cate with the coroner. It is a most serious business—in fact, I cannot exaggerate its seriousness."

"And when," asked Mark hoarsely, "was it done?"

"Two days ago, I should fancy," returned the doctor, after he had made a further examination.

"He came here on Thursday night," said Mark, much agitated; "and they tell me that he left suddenly after dinner, in order to catch the Scotch mail."

"Who told you that, sir?" demanded the policeman.

"My uncle. My father had arranged to sleep here; but my uncle told me this afternoon that he had suddenly altered his mind."

Serjeant Brown coughed expressively, and made copious notes. Then he sent off a messenger to the police-station in the village, and requested Mark to make it convenient to remain at the Moat House.

The young man did not desire to leave the place. He felt that before he went away, even for a day, he must solve the horrible mystery of his father's death—solve it, if necessary, at the expense of her whom he loved best. And, thus reminded of May, he went to her at the earliest opportunity.

He found her alone in the drawing-room. She, poor girl, knew nothing of her uncle's death; but her father's sudden and inexplicable illness had been sufficient to make her very anxious and unhappy. Mark deemed it best to tell her, and he broke the news to her gently as he possibly could. The effect on her was, as he had expected, touching in the extreme; yet she mastered her feelings wonderfully well, and with her, as with Mark, the first desire seemed to be that at all costs the mystery should be solved.

"And it must have happened on Thursday night!" she exclaimed. "Why, that was the very night that papa came in here all bleeding and covered with mud!"

"I have not heard of that, though I think he told me that he had had a fall."

"He fell down in the garden, you know," she continued unsuspiciously; "and you may imagine how frightened I was when he appeared before me in such a state."

Mark dared not question May further. His heart sank within him.

"Well," he said, "we must leave everything to the police for the present; and now I will go and see how your father is. Doctor Plover has kindly promised to stay here during the night, and he thinks that Uncle Horace may, with careful attention, pull through.

Mark kissed May tenderly and pityingly, and left her, bravely determined that, come what might, nothing should ever part them. Yet, as the evening wore on, he could not make up his mind to face her again.

After dark a detective from London arrived and held an informal inquiry, taking first Doctor Plover's evidence, then Mark's, and then the cook's. When May, in her turn, was summoned into the library, Mark retired. He could not bear to witness her agony; and he knew well the opinion which the shrewd detective had by this time formed, and with what intent poor May would be questioned by the business-like officer. The man however was as delicate as his position and duties permitted him to be, and May underwent the ordeal without for a moment dreaming that her interrogator already regarded her as a murderer's daughter.

When she had returned sobbing to the drawing-room, and Mark went back to the library, the detective announced his intention of visiting the "Queen's Head" at once and examining Welsh.

"I have seen him this afternoon," said the doctor; "you will find him still stupid, but able to answer questions."

"If we can only discover that there was a quarrel of some kind," observed the detective significantly, as he took his leave, "I think the case will be clear enough to go before the coroner. I shall send up a man from the police-station to sleep here. You can stow him away in some odd corner, I dare say; and I suppose, doctor, that there is no possibility of Mr. Horace Bramber's leaving the house?"

"Oh, I will answer for him!" replied the doctor. "Good-night."

CHAPTER III.

SIX weeks had passed since the day of the discovery of Peter Bramber's body in the garden of the Moat House, and July had arrived. James Welsh had never entirely recovered from his terrible fit of intoxication, and had died at the "Queen's Head"; but before his death he had made a statement. His mind at the time was not very clear, and his deposition could be received only for what it might be worth in

the estimation of a decerning British jury; but he had given a more or less plausible account of what had happened at the Moat House on the evening of Peter Bramber's disappearance. He deposed that there had been a quarrel between the two brothers. He had heard them using strong language when they were sitting together on the lawn before dinner; he had heard them exchanging still more angry words in the dining-room after dinner; he had, later in the evening, caught a glimpse of Horace Bramber, bleeding and mud-stained, in the drawing-room, which he had evidently entered by the window from the garden; and—— But there his disposition suddenly broke off. He had been about to make further disclosures when death had silenced him forever.

At the inquest this incomplete statement had been put in. It had not weighed very heavily, but it had produced a certain effect. May's evidence had to some extent strengthened it; so had the cook's; and, after a patient inquiry, the jury had returned a verdict of willful murder against Horace Bramber.

In the middle of July the prisoner was tried at the Central Criminal Court. Appearances were from the first against him. Almost the only important witness who was called for the defence was the station-master; but his evidence was of some value. He testified that on the eventful Thursday evening, on which, according to the statement of the prisoner's counsel, Peter Bramber had suddenly quitted the Moat House the deceased had come to the station, where he had left his portmanteau and had taken a ticket for Edinburgh. The witness could not positively declare that Mr. Bramber had gone on by the next local train to Tylerford, where he might have caught the mail, but he believed that he had. He had last seen the deceased standing, portmanteau in hand, upon the platform, apparently waiting for the local train; and the portmanteau had certainly disappeared. Inquiries were made at Tylerford, but in vain. No one there or any one else on the home section of the line had seen the deceased; nor could the guard of the mail-train give any information.

In his summing-up the judge commented at great length upon the station-master's evidence, and he seemed to incline to the opinion that, as the counsel for the prosecution had already suggested, the witness was mistaken. He implored the jury however to consider the matter carefully, and to give the prisoner at the bar the benefit of any doubt that might have arisen. The twelve jurymen retired to consider their verdict; and a terrible period of agony and suspense began for poor May, who sat half fainting in a private room to which she had been conducted by the favor of the officials of the court. Mark dared not approach her, although he was as true and loyal to her as he had ever been before the day of the awful discovery. May's sole companion was Miss Churchley, who listened intently at the slightly-opened door of the room for the sounds which should indicate that the prisoner's fate had been decided.

During the whole of the trial Horace Bramber had maintained a calm and dignified demeanor; but when he was taken out of court during the deliberation of the jury, he broke down completely. He realized how cruelly circumstantial was the evidence against him; he saw how very narrow were his chances of escape; and, although he was no longer young, he shrank from the ignominious end that seemed to be in store for him.

After an unusually long absence, the jury returned, and Horace Bramber was taken back to learn his fate. The verdict was, as he had feared, "Guilty;" and then, amid an awful silence, the judge solemnly assumed the black cap and pronounced the sentence that he had the power to inflict—a sentence of death.

Horace Bramber was borne almost senseless to the cells. The medical man in attendance feared of recurrence of the apoplectic seizure; but his fears were not realized. May, in spite of her entreaties to be permitted to see her father, was taken home by Doctor Plover and Miss Churchley. Mark, to whom the blow was scarcely less appalling, though of course he had been better prepared for it, also went down to Pinford; but, instead of going to the Moat House, he went to Mr. Gargoyle's rooms and begged the good-natured curate to be his host for a few days.

"I want to be near poor May, you know," he said; "yet I dare not face her. Was there ever before such a frightful tragedy in any family, and shall we ever again be what we were to each other?"

Mr. Gargoyle would not increase his friend's unhappiness by expressing his candid opinion on the subject, for he realized how im-

probable it was that a man would marry the daughter of his father's murderer. However, encountering Marks despondent glances, he felt justified in assuming an encouraging demeanor.

"It will blow over in time," he said; "and then you and your cousin can forget and be happy. You are not to blame—neither is she; and, if any forgiveness is needed, it is surely on your part than on hers. I will get Agnes—that is, Miss Churchley—to talk to her.

The matter however could not be mentioned to May during the dreadful days in which her father lay under sentence of death. She visited him, and the scene between the two tried the poor girl's strength to the utmost.

"Don't bear malice, May, for my sake," he implored her. "No one is to blame except myself. I did quarrel with your unfortunate uncle. Our last words together were words of anger—anger over a ridiculously trivial dispute—and, if I were to live for a century, I should not cease to regret our parting; but, as for having killed him, May, do you, can you believe it for an instant? I know that you cannot. Circumstances were against me—even your evidence was against me. But heaven knows I never in my life wished my poor brother any harm; and I am to this day as ignorant as you are as to how he died. If Welsh were still living, I believe he could tell much. Not that I mean for a moment to suggest that he was the murderer; but you must remember the mysterious events that took place on the last two days of his stay at the Moat House—the two days on which, according to the medical evidence, your uncle was lying dead. Since I have been here I have had much time for thought, and it seems to me that Welsh must have known more than he had time to tell. But it is too late now for considerations of that kind. I have to die—to die and to shame you. Do not forget me, my little girl, and do not be unreasonable. You will be almost alone in the world—Mark is your nearest relative. Ah, May, how happy you might have been if all this had not occurred! But now, of course, that is out of the question. Mark must believe me to be guilty; and, if that is so, all is over between you and him. Yet, May, if by any possibility my innocence should be established after I am gone, for my sake and for your poor uncle's be good to Mark. He would make you the best husband in the world; and, thinking that you and he might be one, I should feel it less hard to die. Promise me that, May!"

It was to be the final parting between father and daughter, yet the inexorable rules of the prison would not permit them to remain together for long. May heart-broken and sobbing, was led back to Miss Churchley, who had accompanied her to the jail; and soon the iron-bound doors shut out the poor girl from the condemned man.

It was Saturday afternoon, and the execution had been fixed to take place on the following Monday. The sun shone brightly as the two girls traveled back in the train to Pinford; but to one of them at least all seemed as dark as a tomb. May felt as if her life must terminate with that of her father. At that dreadful moment she loved him as she had never loved him before, and she forgot all else. Even Mark had no longer a place in her thought; the only image there was the image of her lost father.

On that particular Saturday afternoon a man who looked like a navvy entered a pawnbroker's shop in one of the poorest districts of London and produced a gold watch-chain, which he desired to pledge. The shopman looked at the watch-chain, and then at a printed list which hung on the wall behind him. Having done so, he disappeared for a few moments, and, returning, proceeded to test the chain with acid.

"Oh, it's all right enough, guv'nor!" said the laborer. "'Twere given me for a testermonial by a gent as 'as nothink but the very best."

"A presented—eh?" queried the shopman pleasantly.

"You've hit it," returned the navvy, who certainly looked as if he could never have merited so handsome a reward, "given me by a gent as 'as sailed for Jamakey, where 'e 'has perticler business."

Just at that moment he felt himself tapped upon the shoulder, and, turning, found himself confronted by a constable.

"Quite right!" exclaimed the policeman significantly to the shopman, who held up the chain for him to inspect. "That's Mr. Bramber's albert, or there ain't no truth in the published description." And without many more words he took charge of the navvy, and escorted him to the nearest police-station.

The suddenness of the arrest seemed to

take all the spirit out of the prisoner. At first he made a rambling statement to the superintendent which quite contradicted what he had told the pawnbroker, and then, in spite of the warning usually given in such cases, he made a full confession which solved the mystery of Peter Bramber's death and saved Horace Bramber's life.

The man, whose name was William Riggins, and who, it was discovered, bore a very bad character, was really a navvy, and who had for some time been engaged as such on the railway line close to Pinford station. On the evening of Peter Bramber's disappearance Riggins and an equally vicious comrade named Laker, having finished their day's work, had walked along the line towards the station, but, just before reaching it, had beeen attracted by the open door of a goods-shed that stood near the extremity of the down platform. They had entered, intent upon plunder, and, after having searched high and low, had selected a large case upon which to begin operations, and had indeed already prised it open, when they were interrupted by a stranger who walked in and surprised them *in flagrante delicto*. They therefore pretended that they were engaged upon their legitimate duties as servant of the railway company.

The stranger, who was an old gentleman carrying a small portmanteau, apologized for his intrusion, explaining that in the darkness he had mistaken the goods-shed for a waiting-room; and then, being apparently of a somewhat inquisitive disposition, he had begun to peer about.

Riggins and Laker had already removed a number of bottles of wine from the case which they had forced open, and they had placed the lid of it upright against the wall. The intruder chanced to catch sight of a card which was nailed to the lid, and at once bluntly charged the men with the commission of a robbery. Seeing that he was not disposed to condone their offence and that he was making off to inform the station-master, they shut and bolted the door. The stranger shouted for help, but they fell upon him and seized him by the throat. During the struggle the train for Tylerford entered the station; but they held him down until it had departed and the platform was once more deserted. Then they loosened their grasp, only to find that the stranger was dead.

Terrified at what had occurred, they hastily removed the rest of the bottles, forced the body into the case, nailed it down, and warily made off with their spoil, including the stranger's portmanteau and valuables. The wine they hid provisionally under a ledge in neighboring field, the other things they took at the earliest opportunity to London. At the division of the booty the incriminating watch-chain fell as Riggin's share.

Such was the substance of the man's confession. On the morning after the murder the case—which was one of the three containing malmsey intended for the Moat House—was called for by Sykes, the Pinford carrier, and conveyed unsuspectingly to its destination. Welsh must have opened it and discovered its hideous contents. The discovery had doubtless brought on the fit which had so much alarmed the cook on the Friday. In the meantime the body must have lain in the cellar, and Welsh, terrified lest its discovery should lead to his being charge with murder, must have hidden himself behind the cases, and during the night have stolen out of the house, carried the body into the rhododendron shrubbery, and hastily and ineffectually buried it. The police suppose that after having done this he returned to the cellar, smashed a number of empty bottles, so as to be able to account for the presence in the bins of only eight instead of twelve dozens of malmsey, and then, to free his mind from the gruesome thoughts that must have filled it, opened other bottles of wine, and brought himself to the condition in which he was found the next morning. He might even have believed that Horace Bramber had committed the murder. If so, that would explain the butler's otherwise inexplicable antipathy for his master, and the generally hostile tone of his dying depositions, so far as they were taken.

And so the mystery of the Moat House was laid bare. Horace Bramber was providentially saved from a dreadful death; but, owing to the quaint formalities of British law, he had to be formally pardoned for the crime which he had not committed before he was at liberty to rejoin his daughter. She, poor girl, was for a time nearly mad with conflicting emotions; but there was no longer anything to separate her from Mark, and, before the new year was many days old, May fulfilled her promise.

AN UNFORTUNATE MATCH.

By Florence Marryat.

CHAPTER I.

IT is towards the close of a long bright day in June, that a young collegian enters, somewhat hastily, the courtyard of an inn on the outskirts of an English university town.

"Halloo there!" he calls sharply to a skulking ostler, who recognizes him with a touch of the forelock, "bring my horse round, will you, and be quick about it!"

As the ostler disappears to obey his orders the young man leans lazily against the stable wall, and the traces of some secret care or annoyance are very visible upon his countenance. He ought to possess neither, for he is young, good-looking, affluent, and of high birth, being the second son of the Earl of Norham; but what charm is there to make even earl's sons invulnerable against the effects of the woes which they created for themselves? A few months back, Eric Keir almost believed that the world was made for him and men in the same position as himself; to-day, he would give the world, were it his own, to be able to retrace his steps, and undo that which is irremediable. And yet he has not completed his two-and-twentieth year!

As the ostler brings his horse—a fine bay animal of some value—up to his side, Eric Keir starts as though he had been dreaming, and seizing the reins abruptly, is about to spring into the saddle. His foot, however, has but reached the stirrup, when he is accosted from the other side.

"Why, Keir, old fellow, what an age it is since we met! Where have you been hiding yourself? I seem to have seen scarcely anything of you during the whole term." And the hand of Saville Moxon, a fellow-student, though not at the same college, is thrust forward eagerly to take his own.

At which Eric Keir descends to earth again, with an appearance of being less pleased than embarrased at this encounter with his friend, who is moreover, intimately acquainted with all the members of his family.

"If you have not seen me, Moxon, it is your own fault," he replied, moodily, "for you know where to find me when I am at home."

"Ah! exactly so, my dear fellow—when you are at home; but have you any distinct recollection of when you last practised that rather negative virtue? For my part, I can affirm that you have sported the oak on, at least, a dozen occasions during the last two months, when I have been desirous of palming my irreproachable company upon you. What do you do with yourself out of college hours?"

At this question, innocent though it appears, Keir visibly reddens, and then tries to cover his confusion by a rough answer.

"Much the same as you do, I suppose; much the same as every man does who is condemned to be cooped up for three parts of the year in this musty old town. Try to forget that there is such a place."

But Saville Moxon is not to be put out of temper so easily.

"By riding out of it, as you are going to do now," he says, with a light laugh, as he lays his hand upon the horse's mane. "Where are you bound to, Eric?"

"What business is that of yours?" is trembling upon the lips of Eric Keir; but he represses the inclination to utter it, and substitutes the answer, "Nowhere in particular."

"Then don't let me detain you. I want to speak to you, but I can walk by your side a little way, or, stay. I dare say they have an animal in the stables they can let me have, and we'll take a gallop together, as we used to do in the old days, Keir."

But to the proposal Eric Keir appears anything but agreeable.

"By no means," he rejoins, hastily. "At least, I know they have nothing you would care to mount, and I am quite at your service, Moxon, if you wish to speak to me. Here, ostler, hold my horse."

"But why should I keep you from your ride?"

"Because I prefer it; prefer, that is to

say, speaking to a friend quietly to howling at him across the road. Let us turn out of this courtyard, where every wall has ears, and every window a pair of eyes. And now what is your business with me?"

The young men have gained the road by this time, which is sufficiently removed from the town to be very dusty, and shaded by leafy trees.

"Who would ever have thought of meeting you out here, Keir?" is Moxon's first remark. "And how long is it since you developed a taste for country lanes and hedges?"

"I don't admire quickset hedges more than I ever did, but when a man rides for exercise, one direction is as good as another."

"But what induced you to remove your horse from Turnhill's? Didn't they do justice to him?"

"Well—yes," in a hesitating manner. "I had no particular fault to find with them; but these stables are more convenient."

"Less so, I should have imagined. Why you have nearly a mile more to walk to them."

"Perhaps I like walking, anyway, that's my business. What's yours?"

At this curt rejoinder, Saville Moxon turns round and regards him steadily in the face.

"What is the matter, Keir?" he says, kindly. "Are you ill? And, now I come to look at you, you have certainly grown much thinner since I saw you last, and, if you were not such a lazy fellow, I should say you had been overworking yourself."

To which Keir responds, with a harsh laugh:—

"Yes, Moxon, that's it—too much study. It's an awfully bad thing for young fellows of our age; so trying to the constitution. Ha! ha! ha!"

"But you really don't look yourself, Keir, for all that. I am afraid you must have been living too fast. Don't do it, dear old fellow, for all our sakes."

The affectionate tone touches some chord in Eric Keir's heart, and he answers, almost humbly:—

"Indeed, I have not been living fast, Moxon; on the contrary, I think I have been keeping better hours this term than usual. One comes so soon to the conviction that all that kind of thing is not only degrading, but wrong. Yet one may have troubles nevertheless. How are all your people at home?"

"Very well indeed, thank you, and that brings me to the subject of my business with you. It is odd I should have met you this afternoon, considering how much separated we have been of late; for if I had not done so, I should have been obliged to write."

"What about?"

"I had a letter from your brother Muiraven this morning."

"Ah! more than I had, it's seldom either of them honor me."

"Perhaps they despair of finding you—as I almost began to do. Any way, Lord Muiraven's letter concerns you as much as myself. He wants us to join him in a walking tour."

"When?"

"During the vacation, of course."

"Where to?"

"Brittany, I believe."

"I can't go."

"Why not? It will be a jolly change for you. And my brother Alick is most anxious to be of the party. Fancy what fun we four should have! It would seem like the old school-days coming over again."

"When we were always together, and always in scrapes," Keir interrupts, eagerly. "I should like to go."

"What is there to prevent you?"

"Oh, I don't know—nothing in particular—only I don't fancy it will be such fun as you imagine; these tours turn out such awful failures sometimes; besides"——

"Besides what?"

"It will be a great expense, and I'm rather out of pocket this term."

"That is no obstacle, for you to go as Muiraven's guest. He says especially—let me see, where is the letter?" producing it from his pocket as he speaks. "Ah, here it is, 'Tell Eric he is to be my guest, and so are you'—though, for the matter of that," continues Moxon, as he refolds the letter and puts it in the envelope, "my accepting his offer, and your accepting it, are two very different things."

"I can't go, nevertheless, and you may write and tell him so."

"You had better write yourself, Keir; you may be able to give your brother the reasons which you refuse to me."

After this, they pace up and down for a

few minutes in silence, minutes which appear long to Eric Keir, for he pulls out his watch meanwhile to ascertain the hour.

"Keir, are you in debt?" says Moxon.

"Not a penny; or, at all events, not a penny that I shall be unable to pay upon demand. Has any one been informing you to the contrary?"

"No one, it was but a surmise. I hope then—I hope there is no truth in the rumor that has reached me, that you find more charms in a certain little village not twenty miles from Oxford, than in anything the old town contains."

Saville Moxon is hardly prepared for the effect which his words produce; for Eric Keir stops short upon the country path which they are traversing, and the veins rise upon his forehead, and his whole face darkens and changes beneath the passion which he cannot help exhibiting, although he is too courteous to give vent to it without further cause.

"What village?" he demands, quickly.

"Fretterley."

Then the knowledge that he is in the wrong, and gossip in the right, and that something he is very anxious to keep secret is on the verge of being discovered, gets the better of Eric Keir's discretion, and he flares out in an impetuous manner, very much in character with his quick impulsive nature:—

"And what the d—l do your confounded friends mean by meddling in my affairs?"

"Who said they were friends of mine?" retorts Moxon. And the laugh with which he says it is as oil cast on the flame of Eric Keir's wrath.

"I will allow of no interference with anything I choose to do or say. I am not a child, to be followed, and gaped at, and cackled about by a parcel of old women in breeches; and you may tell your informant so, from me, as soon as you please."

"Keir, this is folly, and you know it. Fretterley and its doings are too near at hand to escape all observation, and the fact of your visiting there, and the vicar of the parish having three very pretty daughters, is quite sufficent to set the gossips talking, but not to provoke such an ebullition of anger from yourself."

"I don't care a fig about the vicar or his daughters either; but I do care to hear that I can't ride a mile in one direction or another without all Oxford talking of it. I hate that style of femenine cackle which some of the fellows of the college have taken up, and I say again, that they are a set of confounded meddlers, and if I catch any one of them prying into my concerns, I won't leave him a whole bone in his body."

"You are childish!" exclaims Moxon. "As I repeated the report, Keir, I suppose I am one of the "confounded meddlers" you allude to, and it may not be safe for me to remain longer in your company, and so, good day to you, and a better spirit when we meet again." And turning abruptly from him, he commences to walk in the direction of the town. But slowly, and somewhat sadly; for he has known Eric Keir from boyhood, and, imperious as he is with strangers, it is not often he exhibits the worst side of his character to his friends.

For a moment—while pride and justice are struggling for the mastery within him—Eric looks at the retreating figure, and then, with sudden impulse, he strides hastily after Moxon, and tenders him his hand.

"Forgive me, Saville! I was wrong—I hardly knew what I was saying."

"I was sure you would confess it, sooner or later, Eric, your faults are all upon the surface."

And then they shake hands heartily, and feel themselves again.

"But about this Fretterley business," says Eric, after a slight hesitation, "stop the gossip as much as lies in your power, there's a good fellow! For I swear to you I have no more intentions of making love to the vicar's daughters than I have to the vicar himself."

"I never supposed you had; but when young and fashionable men persist in frequenting one locality, the lookers-on will draw their inferences. We are not all earl's sons, remember, Eric, and you dwell in the light of an unenviable notoriety."

"Unenviable indeed, if one's footsteps are to be dogged! And fancy what my father would say if such a rumor reached his ears!"

"He would think nothing of it, Keir. He knows that you love him too well to dream of making a *mesalliance*."

"Who talks of a *mesalliance*?" interposes the other, hurriedly.

"Myself alone. The vicar's daughters, though exceedingly handsome, and, no doubt, very amiable girls, are not in the position of life from which Lord Norham

expects you to choose a wife. He thinks a great deal of you, Eric."

"More's the pity; he had much better build his hopes on Muiraven or Cecil."

"O Cecil will never marry! Young as he is, he is marked out for a bachelor. And as for Muiraven, he will, in all probability, have to sacrifice his private instincts to public interests. Besides"—in a lowered voice—"you should never forget that, were anything to happen to Muiraven, the hopes of the family would be set upon you."

"Don't talk such nonsense, Moxon. Muiraven's life is worth ten of mine, thank God! and Cecil and I mean to preserve our liberty intact, and leave marriage for the young and the gay; yourself, *par exemple*."

"Call a poor devil who has nothing but his own brains to look to for a subsistence young and gay? My dear boy, you'll be a grandfather before I have succeeded in inducing any woman to accept my name and nothing a year."

"Ugh!"—with a shudder—"what an awful prospect! I'd as soon hang myself!"

"Well, it needn't worry you just yet," says Moxon, with a laugh. "But I must not keep you any longer from your ride. Shall you be in your rooms to-morrow evening, Keir?"

"Probably; that is, I will make a point of being there, if you will come and take supper with me. And bring over Summers and Charlton with you. And look here, Moxon, stop this confounded rumor about me, at all hazards, for heaven's sake!"

"If there is any truth in it, why should you object to its circulation?" inquires Moxon, bluntly.

"There is no truth in it. I hardly know the man by sight, or his daughters; but you are aware of my father's peculiarities, and how the least idea of such a thing would worry him."

"We should have Lord Norham down here in no time, to find out the truth for himself. So it's lucky for you, old fellow"—observing Keir's knotted brows—"that there's nothing to find out."

"Yes, of course; but I hate anything in the shape of town-talk, true or otherwise."

"There shall be no more if I can prevent it, Keir. Good-by."

"Good-by till to-morrow evening, and don't be later than ten."

He remains on the spot where Saville Moxon left him for a moment, and then turns, musingly, towards the courtyard of the inn again.

"What upon earth could have put Fretterley into their heads," he ponders, "when I have been so scrupulously careful, that even the ostler at the village inn doesn't know me by my right name? It's an awful nuisance, and will entail a move at the very time when I can least afford it. My usual luck!" And, with a shrug of the shoulders, Eric Keir reenters the stable-yard. The man is still waiting there with his horse, and, when the gentleman is mounted, he touches his cap and asks when he may be expected to return."

"Impossible to say," is the unsatisfactory rejoinder. And in another minute Keir has driven spurs into the animal's side, and is galloping, to make up for lost time, along the road which leads—to Fretterley.

As he rides hurriedly and carelessly along, his thoughts are conflicting and uneasy. His impulsive and unthinking nature has led him into the commission of an act which is more than rash—which is unpardonable, and of which he already bitterly repents; and he sees the effect of this youthful folly closing about him and hedging him in, and the trouble it will probably entail, stretching out over a long vista of coming years, to end, perhaps, only with his life.

He knows that his father (a most loving and affectionate father, of whom he has no fear beyond that begotten by the dread of wounding his affection) cherishes high hopes for him, and expects great things—greater things than Eric thinks he has the power of performing. For Lord Muiraven, though a young man of sterling merit—"the dearest fellow in the world," as his brothers will inform you—is not clever; he knows it himself, and all his friends know it, and that Eric has the advantage over him, not only in personal appearance, but in brains. And though it would be too much to affirm that Lord Norham has ever wished his sons could change places, there is no doubt that, while he looks on Muiraven as the one who shall carry on his titles to a future generation, his pride is fixed on Eric; and the ease with which the young fellow has disposed of his university examinations, and the passport into society his agreeable manners have gained for him, are topics of unfailing interest to the earl.

And it is this knowledge, added to the rememberance of a motherless childhood

sheltered by parental care from every sorrow, that makes his own conduct smite so bitterly on the heart of Eric Keir. How *could* he have done it? Oh, what a fool—what an ungrateful, unpardonable fool he has made of himself! And there is no way out of the evil; he has destroyed that which will not bear patching—his self-respect! As the condition presses home to him, tears, which do him no dishonor, rise to his eyes, yet are forced back again, as though to weep had been a sin. How much the creatures suffer who cannot, or who dare not, cry! God gave ready tears to women, in consideration of their weakness; it is only strong hearts and stronger minds that can bear torture with dry eyes.

But there is little trace of weakness left on the face of Eric Keir, as, after an hour's hard riding, he draws rein befor the village inn of Fretterley. The young collegian seems well known there; for before he has had time to summon the ostler, the landlord himself appears at the front door, to ease him of his rein, and is shouting for someone to come and "'old Mr. 'Amilton's 'orse" while he draws "Mr. 'Amilton's beer."

"Mr. 'Amilton" appears to respond but languidly to the exertions made on his behalf; for he drinks the beer which is handed him mechanically, and, without further comment, turns on his heel, much to the disappointment of the landlord, who has learned to look regularly for the offer of one of those choice cigars of which the young gentleman is usually so lavish.

"Something up there, I bet," he remarks to the partner of his bosom; "getting tired of her, I shouldn't wonder; they all does it, sooner or later. Men will be men."

"Men will be men! men will be *brutes*, you mean!" she retorts, in her shrill treble. And from the sound of her voice, the landlord thinks it as well not to pursue the subject any further.

Not afraid of her—oh, dear, no! What husband ever was afraid of anything so insignificant as the weaker vessel?—only—Well, landlord, have it thine own way; it does us no harm!

Meanwhile Eric Keir has walked beyond the village, perhaps a quarter of a mile, to where a small farm cottage, surrounded by a garden of shrubs, stands back from the highway. He pushes open the painted wicket with his foot, more impetuously than he need have done, and advances to the hall door. Before he can knock or ring, it is thrown open to him, and a woman flings herself upon his neck.

She is a girl still, though several years older than himself; but a woman who is in the glow of youth at five-and-twenty, and this woman had not only youth, but beauty.

"I wish you would remember, Myra, that I am standing at the front door, and reserve these demonstrations of affection for a more private place. I have told you of it so often."

He disengages her arms from his throat as he speaks, and her countenance lowers and changes. It is easy to see that she is quick to take offence, and that the repulse has wounded her. So they pass into the sitting-room in silence, and while Eric Keir, monarch of all he surveys, throws himself into an easy-chair, she stands by the table, somewhat sulkily, waiting for him to make the next advances.

"Is old Margaret at home, Myra?"

"I believe so."

"Tell her to bring me some claret. I seem to have swallowed all the dust between this and Oxford."

She does his bidding, bringing the wine with her own hands, and when she has served him, she sits down by the window.

"Come here, child," he says, presently, in a patronizing yet authoritative voice, that accords strangely with his boyish exterior. "What's the matter with you to-day? Why won't you speak to me?"

"Because you don't care to hear me speak," she answers, in a low tone, full of emotion, as she kneels beside his chair. She has large, lustrous, dark eyes, and soft brown hair, that flows and curls about her neck, and a pair of passionate red lips, that are on a dangerous level with his own. What man could resist them? But Eric Keir's mustached mouth bends down to press her upturned forehead only. It is evident that she has lost her power to charm him. Yet his reply is not only patient, but kind.

"What has put that nonsense into your head? Don't make more worries than you need, Myra; we have enough already, heaven knows!"

"But why haven't you been to see me for so many days, then? You don't know how long the time seems without you! Are you getting tired of me, Eric?"

"*Tired!*"—with a smile that is sadder than a sigh. "It is early days for you and me to talk of getting tired of each other, Myra. Haven't we made all kinds of vows to pass our lives together?"

"Then why have you been such a time away?"

"I have had business to detain me; it was impossible to come before."

"What sort of business?"

"Engagements—at college and among my friends."

"Friends whom you love better than me!" she retorts, quickly, her jealous disposition immediately on the *qui vive*.

"It is not fair for you to say so, Myra. I can give you no greater proof of my attachment than I have already given."

"Ah! but I want more, Eric. I want to be with you always; to leave you neither day nor night; to have the right to share in your pleasures and your pains."

He frowns visibly.

"More pains than pleasures, as you would find, Myra. But it is impossible; I have told you so already; the circumstances of the case forbid it."

"How can I tell when you are absent, if you are always thinking of me?—if some other woman does not take my place in your heart?"

"You must trust me, Myra. I am a gentleman, and I tell you that it is not the case—that it never will be."

"Ah! but you cannot tell—you cannot tell!" And here she falls to weeping, and buries her face upon the arm of his chair.

"My poor girl!" says Keir, compassionately.

He does not love her—that is to say, he does not love as he thought he did three months ago, when he believed that he was doing a generous and chivalrous thing in raising her from her low estate to the position she now occupies, and swearing unalterable fidelity at her feet—but he feels the deepest pity, both for her and for himself—and he would wipe out the past with his blood, if it were possible.

"My poor girl—my poor girl!" stroking the luxuriant hair which is flung across his knee, "we have much to forgive each other! Did ever man and woman drag each other more irreparably down than we have done?"

"You have ceased to love me—I know you have!" she continues, through her tears.

"Why should you torture me with such an accusation," he says, impatiently, as he shakes himself free of the clinging arms, and, rising, walks to the window, "when I have already assured you that it is not true? What have I done to make you imagine I am changed?"

"You do not come to see me—you do not caress me—you do not even look at me as you used to do."

"Good heavens! for how long do you expect me to go on 'looking'—whatever that operation may consist of?"

"O Eric! you cannot deceive me; you know you are sorry that we ever met."

Sorry—ay, Gods knows that he is sorry; but he will not tell her so. Yet neither will he fly to her embrace, as three months back he would have done, to assure her that she does his love a cruel wrong by the suspicion. He only stands quietly by the open window, and taking a cigar from his case, lights it and commences smoking; while she continues to sob, in an angry injured manner, by the armchair where he left her.

"Myra, I have but a short time to stay here to-day; why shouldn't we pass it pleasantly together? Upon my word, if you go on like this every time we meet, you will make the place too hot to hold me. Come—dry your eyes, like a good girl, and tell me what you have been doing since I saw you last."

She dashes away her tears, and rises from her kneeling posture; but there is still a tone of sullenness or pride in the voice with which she answers him.

"What should I have been doing but waiting for your arrival? I should have gone to Oxford, most probably, and tried to find your rooms, if you had not appeared this evening."

"You had better not attempt that," he says, decisively.

"But you neglect me, Eric; even old Margaret remarks it; and the vicar said"——

"The vicar!" starting. "When did you see the vicar?"

"The day before yesterday, when he called here."

"Who let him in?"

"I did!" rather definatly. "Old Margaret was out."

"But what communication passed between you?"

"He asked me if my name was Mrs. Hamilton, and I said 'Yes.'"

"What on earth made you say so?"

"Well—haven't you always called me Mrs. Hamilton? Isn't it the name I go by in the village?"

"Not through my means, Myra. I have never mentioned you to anybody, in Fretterly or out of it. And pray, what had the vicar to say to 'Mrs. Hamilton?'"

"He asked if you were Mr. Hamilton; he has seen you riding through the village, and"——

"Don't tell me that you connected our names together before him?" interrupts Keir, with a look of anger.

"Well!—what was I to say?"

"*What were you to say?* You knew well enough what to say to get yourself or me out of a scrape, a few months back. But I see through your design, Myra—you want to force me to do that against which you know I am determined."

"I cannot bear this continual separation," she replies; "it is killing me. I cannot live without you."

"Listen to me, Myra," he says, approaching closer to enforce his argument. "You say you cannot bear this separation; but if you attempt to elude it by any devices of your own, you shall never see me again. You cannot say that I have deceived you; you threw in your lot with mine of your free consent; more than that—you urged me to the step which has brought, God knows, its retribution with it. But if you make our position public, you will do me an irremediable wrong, and injure your own cause. So I warn you!"

"Of what?"

"That suspicion has already fallen upon me for being foolish enough to visit you so openly; so much so, that I had decided, before coming here to-day, to move you as soon as possible from Fretterley; and if the rumor is not stopped by that means, I shall go away till it is forgotten."

"Where?" she inquires, breathlessly.

"In the country, or abroad; anywhere to balk the gossips."

"And without me, Eric?"

"Without you? Of course. What good would it do if I took you with me? Why, if the least hint of such a thing were to reach my father's ears, he would ask me all about it, and I should tell him the truth. I have never told him anything but the truth," adds the young fellow, simply; "and I believe it would kill him."

"And you would give me up for your father?" she says, quickly.

"A thousand times over! My father is everything in the world to me; and I can't think how I ever permitted myself to do that which would so much grieve him."

A dark flush overspread her handsome features as she hears the unpalatable truth, and her full breast heaves and her lips tremble with the deep pain it causes her. She is passing through the greatest agony a woman is capable of feeling; coming gradually but surely to the conviction that her reign is over, her empire over-thrown—that she has lost her place in her lover's heart.

And she loves him so passionately; she has always cared for him far more than he has done for her, and his increasing coldness drives her mad.

"You said that I was everything in the world to you, three months ago," she answers, with set teeth.

"I know I did; and at the time I believed it to be true. But I have told you, Myra, what a proud high family mine is, and how seldom their escutcheon has been tarnished with dishonor. And—forgive me for saying so—I know it is my own fault, but I cannot help being conscious of the fact that I have tarnished it now. And my poor father thinks so much—too much of me; I feel as though I should never be able to look him in the face again." And with that, Eric Keir buries his own face in his hands. She taps the floor impatiently with her foot.

"You are ashamed of me, Eric?"

"I am bitterly ashamed of myself, and of all that has passed between us."

"It would have been better if we had never met."

"Far better—both for you and for myself. Who could think otherwise?"

"It would be better, perhaps, if I were dead."

"It would be better if we were both dead!" he exclaimes, bitterly; "or had died before we saw each other. O Myra! Myra!—why will you wring such cruel truths from my mouth? You have been the death of all good things in me."

He lifts his face to hers, and she is shocked to see the pain portrayed there. She is an illiterate, lowborn woman, with nothing to recommend her beyond her beauty and her fierce love for him, which, yet, is like the love of an unreasoning animal, overpowering when encouraged, and apt to turn the

first time it is thwarted. But she had one indomitable passion—pride, and it is stirring and working in her now.

"Would you be happy if you could undo the past?" she says, in a low voice; "if there had been no such person as me in the world, and you had never fancied that you loved me?"

"Happy!" he answers, with a sad laugh. "I should be happy if I could wipe out the remembrance with my blood; if I could go about the world with a free conscience at the expense of everything I possess. But come, Myra, let us talk no more of impossibilities. The past is past, my child, and nothing you or I can say will ever undo it. Let us think of the present. It is necessary you should leave Fretterley. Where would you like to go?"

"I don't care. You may choose for me."

"Very well, then, I will think the matter over, and let you know. I sha'n't be able to come here to-morrow, as I have an engagement in the town; but the day after you may depend on seeing me. Do you want any money?" taking out his purse.

But she shrinks from the note he offers her as though it had been a serpent.

"No—no! I am not in want of it; I have plenty to serve my need."

"All the better for me," he says, laughing. He has recovered his spirits again; clouds are not long in passing with the young.

"Well—good-by," he continues, as he takes the girl in his arms and kisses her, in a fraternal manner, on the cheek. "It's a shame of me to have made those pretty eyes so red! Don't think twice of what I have said, Myra, you urged me on to it with your cross-questioning, and you know I lament this business for both our sakes; but the dark mood will be gone to-morrow. It's nothing unusual after three months of honeymoon, my dear."

She clings to him frantically close, but she says nothing.

"Why won't you say good-by? Then I must go without it, for I have no more time to loose."

He is moving towards the door, when she flies after him, and almost stifles him in her embrace.

"Oh, good-by, my love!—my darling!—my own, own dearest love!"

She showered kisses, almost roughly on his mouth, his eyes, his brows; kisses which he accepts rather philosophically than otherwise, and from which he frees himself with a sigh of relief.

Alas! for the love of one-and-twenty, when it begins to temper its enthusiasm with philosophy!

As, with a cheerful nod, he turns out of the gate, the woman stands gazing after him as though she had been turned to stone; and when he had finally disappeared, she gropes her way back to the sitting-room, and casts herself headlong on the floor.

"Gone—gone!" she moans; "all gone, and my life gone with it! Oh, I wish that I was dead—I wish that I was buried—I wish that I could neither feel nor think—I am nothing to him now"—

She lies there, for, perhaps an hour, sobbing and moaning to herself, and is only roused by the entrance of the old woman she calls Margaret, with the preparations for her tea, and whose grunt, at perceiving her attitude is half of compassion and half of contempt.

"Lord ha' mussy!" she exclaims; "and whatever are you lying on the boards for?"

This woman, who is clothed and kept like one of gentle birth, and by whom she is fed and paid her wages, is yet not addressed by Margaret in terms befitting a servant to use towards her mistress. The poor are ever keenest at detecting a would-be lady from a real one.

The familiar tone affronts Myra; she reads in it, not sympathy, but rebellion against her newborn dignity, and she rises and sweeps out of the room without deigning to notice the presence of her factotum.

But the bed-room is solitary and full of sad remembrance, and in a few minutes she emerges from it, dressed for walking and saunters into the garden.

It is a queer little nest that Eric Keir has chosen for her, being originally intended for the game-keeper's cottage on an estate which has long since been parted with, acre by acre, and its very name sunk in the obscurity of three or four small farms, so that the cottage stands alone in the midst of wheat and barley fields; and it is through one of these, where the grain, young, and green, and tender, and not higher than a two-years' child, springs up on each side of her, that Myra, still burning as under the sense of a deep outrage takes her way. A resolution has been growing up in her heart during the last hour, which betwixt its pride

and stubborness, it will not easily relinquish —the resolution to part with Eric Keir.

It wrenches her very soul even to think of such a thing, and as she resolves impossible ways and means for its accomplishment, her breath is hardly drawn; but she has a will of iron, and he has wounded her in her most vulnerable part. As she paces slowly up and down the narrow field-path, the jealous angry tears scarce dried upon her cheeks, she hears a rustle in the corn behind her, and the next moment some one touches her upon the shoulder.

Myra is not chicken-hearted, but she is quick to resent an insult.

"How dare you?" she commences, angrily, but as she turns and faces the intruder, her tone is changed to one of consternation.

"Lord above!" she continues, faintly. "How did you ever find me, Joel?"

She is so taken by surprise that she has turned quite pale, and the hand she offers him is fluttering like a bird.

"Find you!" exclaims the new-comer (who, it may be as well at once to state, stands in the relationship of cousin to her); "I would have found you, Myra, if you had been at the furthest end of the whole world."

"Aunt is not here, is she?" inquires Myra, with the quick fear that a woman in her equivocal position has of encountering the reproaches of one of her own sex; "you are sure you're alone, Joel?"

"I'm all alone, Myra. Mother has enough to do to get her living, without coming all the way from Leicestershire to look after you. But I couldn't rest till I'd seen you; I couldn't believe what I've heard, except from your own lips. You've most broke my heart, Myra."

He is an uncouth, countryfied-looking fellow, without any beauty, except such as is conveyed by his love and sorrow; but as he stands there, sheepishly enough, looking down upon the hand he still holds between his own, he commands all the respect due to the man who has done nothing for which he need blush.

His earnestness seems to touch the girl, for she is silent and hangs down her head.

"When we heard that you had left the situation in the hotel where father placed you, and without a word of warning, we couldn't credit it. But some words as the master wrote to mother made us think as all wasn't right with you; and when weeks and months went by and we didn't hear nothing, I began to fear it was true. So I traveled up from home, little by little, doing a job here and a job there, till I got to Oxford, and could speak with the master myself, and though he couldn't satisfy me as to your whereabouts, I came to it by constant inquiry, and reached Fretterley last night. And now, Myra, come home with me. I don't want to make no words about it, I don't want to hear nothing of what you've been doing—'twould only cut me up—but say you'll come back to the old place in Leicestershire, and then I sha'n't think my journey's been took in vain."

He looks her in the eyes as he concludes, and she, unable to stand his scrutiny, drops her head upon his rough velveteen shoulder, and begins to cry.

"O Joel, if I could only tell you!"

"Tell me, my poor lass!—where's the use of your telling me—can't I read the signs you carry about you? What's the meaning of a purple silk gown with lace fripperies upon your back and a pair of gold drops in your ears, if it don't mean shame?"

"No! no! not that!" she cries, recoiling from him.

"I shall think less of you, Myra, if you call it by any other name. But the old home's open to you, my dear, all the same —open to receive and shelter you whenever you choose to come back to it, though you can't never bring the joy to it now that I once thought you would."

The old home! How little she has thought of it of late! Yet she can see it in her mind's eye, as she stands pondering his words. It was not a particular happy home to her; the homes of the poor seldom are. She had known hunger, and thirst, and cold, and occasionally the sound of harsh words within its limits, yet the memory of the dull life she led there seems very peaceful now, compared to the excited and stormy scenes which she has passed since leaving it.

The old home! It was not a paradise but it was more like home to the lowborn girl than daily association with a companion who is as far above her in birth as in intellect, and has grown but too conscious of the gulf that lies between them.

Joel Cray takes her fit of musing for hesitation, and recommences his persuasion.

"I dare say he, whoever he may be—for I know there's a man at the bottom of all

this, Myra (curse him)," he adds, *par parenthese*, "I dare say he does all he can to persuade you that he loves you better than himself, and will be constant to you till death, but"——

"He does not," she interrupts, eagerly, in defence of the absent.

"What!" replies Joel, lost in astonishment; "he's sick of you already! He steals you away from an honest family and an honest employment to make a"——

"Stop!" cries Myra, in a voice of authority.

"What am I to stop for?"

"You shall not call me by that name, it is a lie."

"I wish to God you could prove it, Myra. What are you, then—*his wife*?"

"Of whom are you talking?" with passionate confusion. "How do you know that there is any one? What right have you to come and bully me in this manner?"

"Myra, we were brought up together from little children, my mother was like your mother, and my home was your home; and long before you saw this chap, you knew that I loved you, and looked to wed you when the proper time came—that's my right! And now, as we stand in God's sight together, tell me the truth. Are you married to the man, or are you not?"

At this point-blank question she trembles, and grows red and white by turns, shrinking from the stern glance he fixes on her.

"Joel, don't look at me after that fashion, for I can't bear it! O Joel, you used to love me! Take me back to aunt, and the old place, and the children, for there's no one wants me here."

"My poor lass! Is it really as bad as that—only three months, and tired of you already? Well, well! you'd better have taken me, perhaps, after all—you've made a sorry bargain, Myra."

"O Joel! I love him—I love him beyond everything in the world! He is so clever, and so handsome, and so good to me. But I ain't fit for such as he is; I feel it at every turn. I can't talk, nor behave, nor look as he would wish me to do, and"—in a lower voice—"he is ashamed of me, Joel."

Poor Joel had been silently writhing under the mention of his rival's attributes, but the last clause is too much for him.

"Ashamed of you! the villain! He ain't worthy to touch you. Oh, how I wish I had my fingers this moment at his wizen!"

"Hush Joel! don't say such awful things; but—but"—with a choking sob—"I'm nothing but a worry to him now. He wishes we had never met, he wishes I was dead, and he was rid of me."

"Will you come home with me, or will you not?" shouts Joel, whose patience is thoroughly exhausted. "If you stand here, Myra, a telling me any more of his insults, I swear I'll hunt him down like a dog, and set fire to every stick and stone that he possessed. Ah! you think, perhaps, that I don't know his name, and so he's safe from me; but its' *'Amilton*—there's for you—and if you disappoint me, I'll soon be upon his track."

"O Joel, don't be hard on me, you can't tell how I feel the parting with him."

She turns her streaming eyes upon the cottage, while he, unable to bear the sight of her distress, paces up and down uneasily.

"Then you mean to come back with me, Myra!"

"Yes—yes—to-morrow."

"To-morrow you'll have changed your mind."

"What will there be to change it?" she answers, passionately. "How can anything undo his words? He says I have been the death of all good things in him; that if it were possible he would wipe out even the memory of me with his blood; with his blood, Joel, think of that!"

"Well them's insults, whatever they may mean, that you've no right to overlook, Myra, and if you won't settle 'em, I shall."

"You would not harm him, Joel!" fearfully.

"I'd break every bone in his body, if I'd the chance to, and grateful for it. But if you'll promise to give him up without any more to-do, and come back home with me, I'll leave him to Providence. He'll catch it in the next world if he does not in this."

"I have promised—I will do it—only give me one more night in the place where I have been so happy."

He is not very willing to grant her this indulgence, but she exacts it from him, so that he is obliged to let her have her way, and passes the next twelve hours in a state of uninterrupted fear, lest *he* should appear to interpose his authority, or, after a night's reflection, she should play him false, and decide to remain where she is.

But Joel Cray need not have been afraid. Myra spends the time indeed no less per-

plexedly than he does; but those who knew her innate pride and self-will would have had no difficulty in guessing that it would come off conqueror at last.

"He would give me up a thousand times over for his father," she keeps on repeating, when she finds her strength is on the point to fail; "he said so, he means it, and sooner or later it would be my fate. And I will not stay to be given up, I will go before he has the chance to desert me. I will not be told again that I tarnished his honor, and that we had better both be dead than I live to disgrace him.

"I cannot bear it. Perhaps when he hears that I am gone, and comes to miss me (I am sure that he will miss me), he may be sorry for the cruel things he said, and travel England over till he finds me, and asks me to come back to him again."

The soft gleam which her dark eyes assume as the thought strikes her, is soon chased away by the old sore memory.

"But he will never come; he only longs to be quit of me that he may walk with a free conscience through the world, and I am the stumbling-block in his way. Oh, he shall never say so again! He shall know what it is to be free; he shall never have the opportunity to say such bitter truths to me again."

And so with the morning light, the impetuous, unreasoning creature, without leaving any sign or trace behind her to mark which way she goes, resigns herself into the hands of Joel Cray and flies from Fretterley.

When, according to promise, Eric Keir pays another visit to the game-keeper's cottage, there is only old Margaret to open the door, and stare at him as though she had been bewitched.

"Where is your mistress!" he says, curtly, the expression of old women's faces not possessing much interest for him.

"Lor', sir! she's gone!"

"Gone! where—into the village?"

"Oh, deary me! I knows nothing about it, she never spoke to me. How could I tell but what she'd left by your orders?"

"What do you mean? Has Mrs. Hamilton left Fretterley?"

"Yes sir—I suppose so. I haven't seen nothing of her since yesterday morning."

"Impossible!—without leaving a note or any explanation?"

"I don't know if you'll find a note amongst her things, sir! They're just as she left 'em; I haven't touched nothing; I knows my place better, and I'd rather you would find out the truth for yourself, though I has my suspizzions, of course, which we're all liable to, rich and poor alike. But I haven't worried either, knowing there's no call to fear but what my wages will be all right with an honorable gentleman like yourself."

He makes no effort to restrain her cackle, but passes through the door she has thrown open in silence, and enters the deserted sitting-room. He does not know if he is awake or asleep, he feels as if dreaming.

Gone! Left him! without the intention of returning! It is impossible; she must mean to come back again, she is playing a foolish trick, in hopes of frightening him into compliance with that which she has so often asked, and he refused. But neither in bed nor sitting-room can Eric Keir discover the least indication that Myra's absence is to be a temporary one; nor a written line of threatening or farewell. On the contrary, she has taken all the simplest articles of her attire with her, and left behind, strewn on the floor in proud neglect, the richer things with which he has provided her. Weary, and utterly at a loss to account for this freak on the part of one who has appeared so entirely devoted to himself, Eric returns to the lower room, and summons old Margaret to his side.

"I can find nothing to account for Mrs. Hamilton's departure. What do you mean by having your suspicions?" he inquires in a determined voice.

"Well, sir—deary me! don't take offence at what I say, but truth is truth, and your lady didn't leave this house alone as my own eyes is witness to."

His face flushes, and as he puts the next question he shades it with his hand.

"Who did she leave it with then? Speak out, woman, and don't keep me waiting here forever!"

"Oh, Lor', sir! don't take on so, there's a dear gentleman. I can't rightly tell you, sir, never having seen the young man before; but he was hanging about here the evening you left, and talking with your lady in the field, and he fetched away her box with his own 'ands, yesterday morning, as I watched 'im from the kitchen winder. A country-looking young man he was, but not ill-favored, and as they walked off together,

I see him kiss the mistress's cheek, that I did, if my tongue was to be cut out for saying so the very next minute."

"There—there! that will do, go to your work, and hold your tongue, if such a thing is possible to you. You will remain on here, and when I have decided what is to be done with these things, I will let you know."

And so saying, Eric Keir strides from the house again, mounts his horse and retakes his way to Oxford.

"A young man, country-looking, but not ill-favored; some one of the friends from whom he has alienated her, perhaps. Certainly a person of her own class, and to whom she returns in preference to himself.

"How could he ever have been such a fool as to suppose that a woman taken from her station in life, accustomed to, and probably flattered by the attentions of clod-hoppers and tradesmen, could appreciate the niceties of such a sacred thing as honor, or the affection of an elevated or intellectual mind?"

So he says, in his first frenzy of wrath and jealousy and shame, but so does he not entirely believe. The old woman's gossip has left a miserable doubt to rankle in his heart; but has not accomplished the death of his trust in the girl who has left him, and whom, though he has ceased to love, he feels bound to search after, and succor and protect. He makes all the investigations that are possible without betraying his secret to the world; but private inquiries and carefully-worded newspaper advertisements prove alike futile, and from the day on which she fled from Fretterley the fate of Myra to Eric Keir is wrapped in dark uncertainty.

This abrupt and mysterious termination to a love-dream which he had once believed to be the keystone of his life had a great effect upon the bodily and mental health of Eric Keir. He becomes morose, absorbed and melancholy; relinquishes the pursuits of which he had been most fond, and avoids the society of his friends. His altered behaviour excites much college talk, and all his former companions, save one, are full of conjecture as to the cause of it. That one is Saville Moxon, who alone believes he knows the reason of the change. He thinks that Eric Keir (notwithstanding his protestations to the contrary) has really been smitten, or at least on the high road to being smitten, by the charms of one or the other of the pretty daughters of the vicar of Fretterley; has given up the pursuit at the expostulation of his friend, and is suffering, by a very natural reaction, for his voluntary sacrifice. Saville Moxon knows as much about it as any of the others.

After a month of silence and suspense, during which, strange to say, Eric Keir, in all his misery, find a sense of relief at not being obliged to pay those secret visits to Fretterley, old Margaret is dismissed, the cottage given up, and its contents scattered by the hammer, but the memory of the days he had spent there does not pass so easily from the young man's mind. Rather it takes root and poisons his existence, like an unextracted barb, so that he looks five years older in as many months, and loses all the effervescence and hilarity of youth.

His brother and his friends persuaded him, after all, to join their walking tour in Brittany, and when it is accomplished Lord Muiraven and the Moxons return to England by themselves, having left Eric on the continent.

"The boy has grown too fast and studied to hard," say Lord Norham, in answer to the inquiries of anxious relatives; "and a little relaxation will do him good in the world. I expect great things of Eric—great things—but I cannot permit his health to be sacrificed to my ambition." In consequence of which, the Honorable Eric Hamilton Keir is lost to his mother country for two eventful years. Could he but have guessed how eventful!

At the expiration of that period we meet him again at a private ball in London.

It is the height of the season; the weather is warm, the room is crowded, and every one not occupied in dancing attempts to find refuge on the landing or the stairs.

At the sides of the open door lean two young men, gazing into the ball-room, and passing their remarks on those they see there.

"Who is the girl that Keir's dancing with?"

"Keir! Where is he?"

"Coming down the left-hand side; the girl in black and gold."

"Why, Miss St. John, of course!"

"And why of course? Who may Miss St. John be?"

"My dear Orme, if you're so lamentably

ignorant, pray speak a little lower. Not to know Miss St. John argues yourself unknown."

"Indeed! Well, she's uncommonly handsome. I should have no objection to number her among my acquaintances."

"I should think not; she's the belle of the season, and only daughter of old St. John the banker, deceased."

"Got any money?"

"Lots, I believe—anyway, her face is a fortune in itself. It ought to command a coronet as faces go now-a-days."

"And Keir, I suppose, is first in the field? Well! I am of a self sacrificing disposition, and wish him good luck."

"He would not thank you for it; he is sublimely indifferent to everything of the sort."

"It does not look like it; I have seen them dancing together several times this evening."

"Ah! that they always do; and I believe he is a constant visitor at the house. But if the St. John cherishes any fond hopes in consequence, I should advise her to relinquish them. Keir is not a marrying man."

"It's early in the day to arrive at that conclusion."

"My dear fellow! he makes no secret of his opinions—nor of his flirtations, for the matter of that. If he has one affair on hand, he has a dozen, and should Miss St. John discard him to-morrow morning, he would replace her in the afternoon."

"You are not giving your friend a very enviable character," remarks Mr. Orme, who is a young man of a moral and sententious turn of mind.

"Can't possibly give him what he hasn't got," replies the other laughing; "and he would be the first to tell you so. Keir's an excellent fellow with men, and a general favorite; but he is certainly heartless where women are concerned, or callous. I hardly know which to call it. He has been terribly spoilt, you see, both at home and abroad; he will view life and its responsibilities with clearer eyes ten years hence."

There is a general crush round the doorway, and the conversation of the young men has been heard by many, but to one listener only has it proved of engrossing interest. That one is Mrs. St. John, the widowed mother of the girl so freely spoken of.

Wedged in upon the landing, and forced to listen to the discussion against her will, she has drunk in with burning cheeks the truths so likely to affect her daughter's happiness; and, as soon as she finds it practicable, she creeps to a corner of the ball-room where she can watch the conduct of Irene and Mr. Keir, and feverishly determine what course of action she is bound, in her capacity of guardian, to pursue respecting them.

Meanwhile the gallop has ended, and Eric Keir leads his partner into an adjoining conservatory, which has been kept dim and cool, and provided with couches for the rest and refreshment of the dancers.

There, while Irene St. John, flushed and excited, throws herself upon a sofa, he leans against the back of a chair opposite and steadfastly regards her.

"I am afraid I have quite tired you, Miss St. John; that last galop was a very long one."

Eric Keir is greatly altered since the days when he paid those secret visits to Fretterley. Travel and time, and something more powerful than either have traced lines across his forhead and made his face sharper than it should be at four-and-twenty. But he is very handsome—handsome with the hereditary beauty of the family; the large sleepy violet eyes and dark hair, and well-cut noble features which the Norhams have possessed for centuries—of which the present Lord Norham is so proud; and the more so because they seem, in this instance, to have skipped over the heir to bestow themselves upon his younger brother.

And this handsome head is not set, as is too often the case, on an indifferent figure, but it carried upright and statelily, as such a noble head should be.

"I am not so tired of dancing, as of attempting to dance," she says, in answer to his remark. "How cool and refreshing this little nook seems, after the crush and heat of the ball-room. Rest and quiet are worth all the glare and tumult of society, if one could but believe it."

"That is just what I was going to observe; you have taken the sentence out of my mouth," says Eric Keir. "The pleasure of a few words exchanged with you alone, outweighs all the attractions of an evening's dancing."

"I did not expect to hear you say so," murmurs Miss St. John, with downcast eyes.

"Why not? Is the sentiment too high to come from a worldling's lips?"

"It is most likely to proceed from the

lips of those who have encountered something to disgust them with the world. I hoped that your life had been all brightness, Mr. Keir."

"It is too good of you even to have hoped. But why should I be exempt from that of which, by your own argument, you must have had experience?"

"Ah! women are more liable to suffering, or they feel it more acutely—don't you think so? My poor father! it seems so short a time since he was here. Did I follow my own inclinations, I should not be mixing in the world, even now; and I often wish I had been firmer in standing out against the wishes of others."

"Don't say that," is the low-voiced rejoinder; "had you refused to enter society, we might not have met! and I was just beginning to be presumptuous enough to hope that our friendship possessed some interest for you."

"And so it does, Mr. Keir; pray don't think otherwise," with a hot bright flush; "a few words of common-sense are the only things which make such a scene tolerable to me."

"Or to myself," he answers, as he takes a seat beside her; "the quickness with which we think and feel together, Miss St. John; the sympathy, in fact, which appears to animate us, is a source of unceasing gratification to me."

She does not answer him; but the strains of the "Blue Danube" waltz came floating in from the adjacent ball-room, and mingle with his words.

"I suppose the world considers me a happy man," he continues, presently. "I dare say that even my own people think the same, and will continue to do so to the end—what then? it makes no difference to me."

How quickly a woman's sympathy catches light when it is appealed to on behalf of a man's suffering! She seems to think it so much harder than the rougher sex should encounter trouble than her patient self! Irene's eyes are full of tender silent questioning.

"And you are not then happy?" they inquire.

"Can you ask the question?" his reply.

"You must have guessed my secret," his tongue says; "you are not an ordinary woman; you look below the surface."

"I confess that I have sometimes thought"——

"Of course you have," he interrupts her eagerly. "I have had trouble enough, God knows, and it will end only with my life."

"O Mr. Keir! you are too young to say that."

"I am too old to think otherwise," he rejoins, moodily; "your trouble was not of your own seeking, Miss St. John—mine is; that makes all the difference.

"It makes it harder to forget, perhaps," she answers, "but not impossible. And you have so much to make life pleasant to you—so many friends"——

"Friends! what do I care for them, excepting one? O Miss St. John! if you will not think me too bold in saying so, it is only since I met you that I have felt as if I really had a friend. The few months we have known each other seem life years in retrospection, though they have flown like days in making your acquaintance."

"We have seen so much of one another in the time," she murmurs, softly.

"Yes! and learned more. Sometimes I can scarcely believe but that I have known you all my life. To feel you really were my friend would be to experience the greatest pleasure that this world still holds for me."

"Why should you not feel so?"

The sweet strains of the "Blue Danube" are being repeated again and again, but above the loudest of them she hears the fluttering of her own heart as she puts the question.

"May I?" laying his hand upon the one which lies upon her lap; "is it possible that you can take sufficient interest in such an insignificant person as myself as to promise to befriend him? Do you know all that is implicated in that promise—the long account of follies and shortcomings you will have to listen to, the many occasions on which you will be asked for counsel or advise, the numerous times that you will feel utterly tired of or impatient with me?"

"I am not afraid of that, Mr. Keir."

"Why do you call me Mr. Keir? Can we be real friends while we address each other so formally? Surely you are above all such prudery, or I am much mistaken in your character."

"I am not a prude, or I think so; yet the name by which I call you can make no difference in my friendship."

"But cannot you guess that I am longing to have the right to speak to you familiarly? Irene—it fits you perfectly. I never knew

an Irene in my life before, yet I could not fancy you by any other name, for I learned to love its sound long before I had the hardihood to hope that its possessor would admit me to her intimacy. I shall be jealous of our friendship, Irene."

"But why should you be jealous?" she demands, in a low voice. Her speaking eyes are cast upon the ground. He can only see the long dark lashes that lie upon her cheeks, and the golden glory of her head, while the sweet soft notes of the music still steal in to fill up the broken pauses of the conversation.

"Because it is a sacred bond between us which no third person must intrude upon; and if it is a secret, so much the better. It will be so sweet to feel that we have anything in common. But if you admit another to your friendship, Irene—if I hear any man daring to call you by your christian name; if I see that you have other confidants whom you trust as much or more than myself, I—I"— waxing fierce over the supposition—"I don't know what I should do!" His violence amuses her.

"You need not be afraid—indeed, you need not; no one of my acquaintance would presume to act in the manner you describe."

"Then I am first, Irene?"

"Quite the first."

"So much the happier for me! But I wonder—I wonder"——

"What?"

"Whether you can be content with such a friendship as I offer you; whether it will be sufficient for your happiness."

"How exacting you must consider me!"

"Not so; it is I that deserve the name. Yet if—if, when we have grown necessary to each other, or, rather, when you have grown necessary to me—you should see some one whom you prefer—some one more attractive more desirable than myself, and desert me in consequence, marry him, in fact, what shall I do?"

She is about indignantly to disclaim the possibility of such a thing, when she is interrupted by the entrance of her mother.

"Irene, what are you thinking of? Captain Clevedon has been looking for you the last half hour. You know you were engaged to him for this waltz."

The voice of Mrs. St. John, usually so sweet and low, especially when she is speaking to her daughter, has become too hightly pitched in her anxiety, and sounds discordant. As she hears it, Irene, blushing all over, rises quickly from her seat.

"Have I been here long, mother? I have been talking, and did not think of it."

"Then you should think of it," retorts Mrs. St. John; "or Mr. Keir" with a dart of indignation in his direction, "should think of it for you. It is not customary with you to offend your partners, Irene."

"Is Captain Clevedon offended? I am so sorry. Take me to him, mother, and I will make the *amende honorable*."

"I don't think you will have the opportunity. I believe he has gone home, where, indeed, it is high time we went also. Come, Irene."

"I am ready, mother. Mr. Keir offers you his arm. No!"—as Eric Keir extends the other for her benefit "take care of mamma, and I will follow, thank you."

So they pass through the ball-room and descend the staircase, Mrs. St. John in dignified silence, and the young people with some amount of trepidation. Yet, as he puts Irene into the carriage he say:—

"Shall I find you at home to-morrow afternoon, Miss St. John?"

She is about to answer timidly that she is not sure, when she is again interrupted by her mother.

"Yes, we shall be at home, and glad to see you, Mr. Keir;" at which unexpected rejoiner Mr. Keir expresses his grateful thanks, and Irene, clasping Mrs. St. John's hands between both her own, lies back upon the cushions, and indulges in a rose-colored dream of comming happiness.

[To be continued.]

A SONG FOR THE NEW YEAR.

THE year is gone! the Year is come!
The fresh New Year, the bright New Year,
That telleth of hope and joy, my dear!
Let us model our spirit to chance and change,
Let us lesson our spirit to hope, and range
Through pleasures to come—through years unknown;
But never forget the time that's flown!

IN A SILENT SEA.

SOME years ago I was homeward bound from the East Indies. We had rounded the Cape without getting the usual dressing, and had picked up the South-east Trades much sooner than we expected. Everything had so far been in our favor, and it was only when we got into the latitude where we ought to have picked up the North-east Trades that, instead of the usual breeze; we came in for nothing but a succession of light winds and variables. With these we gradually worked along until we got into about twenty degrees north latitude, when we had a calm for two days. Shortly before midnight on the second day a light breeze sprang up from the southward. There was only enough wind to keep the sails full, and we glided along at about two knots an hour, with lazy little bobs to a swell that came up from the eastward. All that day the breeze continued light. The sun beat down with tremendous power, and towards noon the breeze died almost entirely away, though the swell continued with a long, low, regular undulations. Away on our port bow heavy clouds began to appear on the edge of the horizon, and the glass was falling rapidly.

I was at the wheel in the first dog watch. We lay heading all round the compass, the ship having no steering-way, and I watched the bank of clouds gathering ominously on our port quarter. The sun seemed to set in a perfect atmosphere of sulphur, leaving some angry-looking streaks of red and gold that gleamed like flashes of lightning suddenly arrested. The skipper paced the quarter-deck, occasionally diving below to look at the glass, and each time returning with a more anxious countenance, and saying to the mate that he had never seen the glass so low since he had been to sea.

"We'll reef her right down at four bells, Mr. Jarvis," he said; "for there's everything good, bad, and indifferent mixed up in those clouds, like an Irish stew."

As soon as the watch came on deck, sail after sail was clewed up and furled, until we had nothing on her but the two lower topsails, foretopmast staysail, and storm staysail. The ship, now denuded of her sails, stood out like a skeleton against the background of copper-colored clouds. The men began to get somewhat depressed, as with a sky and atmosphere like that we knew it was no ordinary blow that we had to expect; and I could hear the shrill voice of a little shrivelled-up old seaman named Lester croaking more than was his wont, and calling to mind the time when he was in the China seas some thirty years before; how the clouds had gathered up in the same way, and how the ship foundered, and all hands were lost except himself.

"Here! cut that yarn," said one of the men. "You're a regular old Jonah!"

The watch below turned in at eight bells, having been cautioned to be ready for a rouse-out. I paced the deck for some time. The captain and the mate were discussing the dirty appearance of the weather. The ship looked absolutely desolate, with her long bare masts tapering away into the darkness.

"I don't like the way that stuff hangs about," said the skipper; "when it does come, it will come with a run." Here and there a star would faintly show itself, and the sea glittered with phosphorescent lights. Hour after hour we lay under the shadow of those dense clouds, waiting for the storm to burst. The watch dragged wearily on till close on midnight; when suddenly a bright flash of lightning seemed to part the clouds asunder; then others followed in quick succession.

"We'll catch it directly," piped the shrill voice of Lester, and he was right. Scarcely were the words uttered when we heard a roaring sound in the distance, which increased into a whirling shriek. In an instant it was upon us. Fortunately, it struck us on the quarter. The ship for a moment plunged forward, burying her bows in the sea. It the same instant there was a terrific bang as the topsails were blown clean out of the bolt ropes; there was not a stitch of canvas left on her, and we scudded under bare poles, the sea bubbling around us, a mass of seething foam. It was impossible to stand upright, and we had to crawl about as best we could.

We were thankful when daylight came, as the horrors of the storm had been much intensified by the pitchy darkness. When the sun rose, sea and sky presented a wild and

grand sight. The scud was flying about us, and the foam below. Everything was rushing madly before the hurricane; there, alone on this wild and desolate world of waters, was our gallant ship staggering before the mighty blast, and fighting the waves like a living thing.

For two whole days and nights we drove along, accompanied only by the incessant roar of the storm. On the third night the ship seemed to lose her buoyancy, and by the heavy deadened way she rose and fell, we thought she had sprung a leak, for her motion was more like that of an old water-logged Quebeccar than of an East Indian clipper. About midnight we sounded the well, but she was as dry as a bone. The sea also became much smoother, and we seemed to be simply rising and falling on a huge swell, instead of going through a heavy sea. As the night wore on the force of the wind greatly abated, insomuch that we were able to get new topsails from below and make them ready to bend. It was intensely dark, and as the hurricane went down an awful stillness prevailed. It seemed as if the continued shrieking of the storm for the last three days had affected our sense of hearing, or else there was something strange, as no water came aboard. We simply rolled about in absolute silence.

The wind gradually died away until it was a dead calm. We lay aloft and bent the new top sails; and by the time we were ready to hoist the yards the morning was beginning to break.

As daylight came on we were astonishsd to find that, instead of being in a clear open sea, we seemed to be in a huge green meadow-land. As far as the eye could reach there was nothing to be seen but a heaving mass of green. We had been driven into the midst of the Sargasso Sea. This accounted for the way she had labored, and the deathlike silence which prevailed. The weeds were already clinging to the sides and bow of the vessel. The sun rose clear and bright, and as the day advanced the heat was excessive. There was not a breath of wind anywhere, so that they lay utterly helpless amidst this tanglement of weeds. We could do nothing now but wait for a breeze to release us. During the day the swell went down, and by night they lay quite motionless, and with a most appalling stillness reigning around.

The night was beautifully clear, and the stars shone out brilliantly; so we spent our first night amongst this sea of weeds and grass, rather pleased than otherwise at the quiet, which was a relief after the three days' incessant shrieking of the hurricane. At sunrise the calm still continued, and the men began to get impatient for a breeze. The day was occupied in scraping the weeds from the sides of the vessel. The heat was intense; there was not a breath of air, and the sky was without a cloud. As far as the eye could see, even from a royal yard, nothing was visible but one unbroken plain of floating weed. The frightful stillness of everything was the worst part of it. Hour by hour it became more oppressive. It was a silence so intense that one seemed to hear it, and by sundown even the nerves of the roughest old seaman had become so unstrung, that the putting down of a pannikin made every one start. Day after day went on without even a catspaw of wind, and the captain soon saw that the only thing to keep up the men's spirits was to give them plenty of work. We painted the ship, tarred down, scraped, holy-stoned, and did every other conceivable kind of work until it became hard to find anything else to do. Curious kinds of creatures crawled about on the top of the weeds, gazing at our unfortunate craft with their meaningless fishy eyes.

When we had been thus becalmed for three weeks, the captain thought it advisable to put us on a short allowance of food and water, as there seemed no more prospect of a breeze now than there was on the day in which we had first got entangled. At first we tried to get up entertainments, but no one seemed to have heart for anything, and all our attempts at amusement failed. The one absorbing thought of the whole crew—morning, noon, and night, waking or sleeping—was, "When shall we get a breeze?" What preyed on our minds most was the apalling stillness. It hung round us like a funeral pall.

One night, while the crew were lying about the deck trying to sleep, I was suddenly aroused by a voice shouting: "Let go your royal halyards."

In a moment every one was on the alert, thinking and hoping that we were in for a breeze. It was a bright moonlight night, not a cloud was to be seen. On the forecastle head stood a seaman waving his arms and calling out that a squall was approaching.

"Where away?" shouted the mate.

"Let go!" he yelled in reply.

We now saw that the poor fellow was raving, and immediately a couple of hands secured him. He became very violent, so much so that it became necessary to put him in irons. All that night the poor fellow raved piteously, chiefly about his wife and child, who he thought were stowed away in some place all alone, and where all was silence. For three days he refused to eat or drink, and appealed incessantly to us to let him go and help his dear ones.

On the fourth morning of his illness it was my turn to watch him. He had been lying quiet for some time breathing heavily. Presently he struggled violently, and I had to call for the assistance of another man to hold him down. Suddenly, with a supreme effort, he burst the irons from his wrists; but the strain had been too much, and he lay back exhausted for a few minutes. Then raising himself on his elbow, he looked round in a dazed way, and putting his hand in mine, said in a quiet voice: "The silence has gone, now Kitty!" and died.

Now that the ravings of this poor tar had ceased, the silence seemed more awful than before, and the skipper in order to keep the men from brooding, ordered a couple of boats to be got out and efforts made to tow the ship clear of the weeds. Our first business was to bury our dead; and as soon as the long-boat was over the side, we lowered the corpse into it. Poor old Jack! he had been a good shipmate, though always rather sentimental! Four sailors and the mate manned the boat, and with much labor and difficulty they managed to get her along until she was about one hundred yards away. We then saw two of the men parting the weeds with the blades of their oars, so as to form a grave. The mate stood up in the stern-sheets and read the burial service, while the body of poor old Jack lay across the midship thwarts. I shuddered as I saw him dropped over amongst the dark clinging weeds.

"Oh!" said Lester, in his shrill voice, "there goes the first, I'll warrant it won't be the last."

"Croaker," some one remarked; and we set to work to get the other boat over, while the funeral party made their way back to the ship.

For a whole week we tried all possible means to shift her with the aid of the boats, but it was not of the slightest use; for if we cleared the tangle of weeds away one day, they were as bad as ever the next, so after a time we gave up this work in despair. Two more of the men now became light-headed, and had to be put under restraint. Day by day things became more desperate, and to our horror we saw that the food and water could not hold out much longer.

The skipper and the mate, after a long consultation, determined to provision a boat and send her to find out how far it was to the open sea.

The mate and four seamen, myself amongst the number, formed the crew. We started at daybreak, and made our way slowly along. When night came, we could still see our vessel across the flat extent of green; but we had made fairly good progress as she was hull down. We divided ourselves into two watches, so that we could keep going both night and day. After three days of this, we found the weeds getting scarcer, and for the first time in six weeks we felt just a flutter of air. Upon this, the mate determined to return and make another effort to tow the ship. When we got back to the vessel, our report somewhat raised the desponding spirits of the men; and it was arranged to make one good effort to tow the ship away on the morning after our return.

That night one of the sick men died. We buried him at sunrise in the same manner as his shipmate, and then started the work of towing. For hours we toiled, the skipper encouraging us from the poop.

"There she moves, my lads—that's it—keep her going," and so on, though I don't think we moved her half a fathom the whole day; and when we returned aboard at nightfall, every one felt more disconsolate than ever. Even the captain, who had always appeared to keep his spirits up, seemed thoroughly downcast; and the deadly stillness was only broken occasionally by the cries of the poor fevered man below.

I lay down on the main hatch to sleep; but found it impossible. I was a good deal distressed at the death of the man we had buried that morning, who had been a great chum of mine, and I lay on my back looking up at the starry heavens, wondering if we were to die off one by one, and if so, who would be the last. The more I thought, the more morbid did my thoughts become. In time the vessel would be carried out of the bed of weeds by some storm or current, an-

when picked up there would be no one to explain how the crew had all gone mad, and died miserably, killed by the utter silence. I grasped my head in my hands. Was I to be the next? Oh, God! I could feel my brain going. The fearful stillness seemed to come over me in waves. I prayed hard and wept desolate tears. I had no energy to move or speak. The sense of overwhelming stillness overpowered me, and made me absolutely helpless. Suddenly I heard the mate shout out: "Port main-brace."

At the same instant a gentle puff of air swept across my face, and the sails that had been hanging idly for so many weeks filled out to the gentle pressure of the breeze. This brought me to my senses. The frightful feeling in my head vanished as I joined the others in trimming the yards. Yes, there was a breeze, but very, very slight. The royals and topgallant sails appeared to be drawing, but we did not seem to be in motion. Presently the captain suggested putting a lighted tar-pot over the side, to see if we were making any way. We were only just moving. Men dared hardly speak lest their voices should drive the breeze away.

When the sun rose the wind freshened, and by eight bells we were perceptibly moving. We brought our sick man on deck, hoping the breeze would revive him; but he never rallied, and died that night; and as we dropped him over the side, the voice of Lester could be heard saying: "Number three gone! We ought to get along all right now."

"You're the Jonah," replied his shipmates. "If we had put you overboard at first, we might have been in dock two months ago."

In two days' time we once more heard the splashing of the sea as the waves danced and curled around the ship's side, carrying the weeds that had grown to her for yards to leeward. Thus, after a captivity of fifty-three days, we found ourselves again on the restless ocean, and even the roar of angry billows was the sweetest music to us, after our long imprisonment in the "Silent Sea."

THEN AND NOW.

By Gilbert Holman.

OH love!—so hallowing every soil
That gives thy sweet flowers room.—WHITTER.

LOVE came to me! And I, his message scorning,
Sped laughing on; when to mine ears this warning
Was wafted clear: Oh, heedless maid, ere many years have fled
Thou wilt regret this act of thine, and bitter tears thou'lt shed;
In days to come, oh, scoffer fair, these words shall rankle sore:
Since thou hast once mine off'ring spurned, I will return no more!

Long years have gone; my cheek hath lost its bloom—
The weary days drag on in changeless gloom;
Tormenting dreams at night my pillow haunt,
Visions of bliss my fitful slumbers taunt;
At dawn I brush the scorching tears away,
And wonder if my love will come to-day.

ST. LOUIS, MO.

LOVE UNDERGROUND.

By Elizabeth Bigelow.

DOCTOR BOB CARRUTHERS was the great man of Orion County. It was a county in Western Pennsylvania, whose hills were wonderful treasure-houses of iron and coal and oil, and the spirit of speculation was constantly a fever heat. Dr. Bob "never took much for doctoring," as he expressed it, but the profession of medicine seemed to be regarded as a family necessity, his ancestors having been physicians as far back as could be traced. His father was a slow and steady-going practitioner; never having any special zeal for his calling, or burning any midnight oil in study, but gaining, by sound sense and experience, some skill, and more reputation.

Abel and Robert, the old doctor's only children, must both be doctors, that was a matter of course. And Abel, the older by two years, stepped quietly into his father's place when he died, and seemed to be perfectly contented to follow in his footsteps. The difference was that he did burn the midnight oil, though he never displayed much enthusiasm about his work. The sick poor had hearts full of gratitude to Dr. Abel. It made not the slightest difference to him that there was no possibility of a fee, and when he prescribed costly delicacies to those who had a hard struggle for the bare necessaries of life he took care that they were forthcoming. The majority of the people found Dr. Abel a slow-going and rather stupid little man, musical, and disagreeable in manner. He was only thirty, but he was looked upon as an incorrigible old bachelor. Already there was a little bald spot on the top of his head, his high, broad forehead had two or three deeply cut lines across it, and people no longer spoke of him as a young man. Indeed they very seldom spoke of him at all, except in connection with some one who was ill. Dr. Bob was popular. His name was in everybody's mouth. He was as handsome as his brother was ugly. He was as quick as Abel was slow, as social and jolly as he was retiring and silent. He did not trouble himself about medicine, but he invested his patrimony in shares in an iron mine, and it proved an enormously profitable speculation. Everything that Dr. Bob touched seemed to turn to money. It is hard to deny, that there is such a thing as luck. All the men in Orion County were saying, "What a lucky fellow Dr. Bob is!" All the girls said, "He deserves to be, he is such a charming fellow." Of course Dr. Bob "struck oil," just as soon as there was anything to strike, and added largely to his "pile" in that way. He speculated continually. Sometimes, of course, he lost, but the balance was always on the winning side.

He drove fine horses, and wore a diamond of marvelous brilliancy in his shirt-front. He was the best dancer in the county, and the leader on all festive occasions.

It is almost needless to add that he was a great favorite with the young ladies, and their mamma's as well; for, if he was a little wild, he was rich. Money, will cover a much greater multitude of sins than Dr. Bob had ever been guilty of. He distributed his attentions very impartially, showing a little leaning toward two or three of the prettiest girls, as was only natural. He called on them all, took them all to drive, by turns danced with them all, and looked unutterable things at them all, from a pair of deeply, darkly, beautifully brown eyes. He was a flirt, but in such an open and ostentatious way that it deceived nobody. Molly Dubring knew perfectly well that the "sweet nothing," which he whispered in her ear, as they were waltzing together, would be repeated to Sallie Temple when dancing the next dance with her, and Sallie Temple that Lillie Jarvis would be regaled with much the same kind of greeting before the evening was over, And so on, indefinitely. Now if any girl allowed herself to fancy that those sweet speeches and tender looks "meant anything," the fault was her own.

Things went on in this way until Kitty King came home from boarding-school. The Carruthers and the Kings had always been friends and neighbors; that is, they lived only a mile apart, and both in Kingstown, which is considered, in the oil region, to be about the same as living next door.

Kitty was ten years younger than Dr. Bob; and when she was a little girl and he a big boy he had snubbed her without mercy. He had been rough and teasing, when he condescended to notice her at all; he thought "girls were a bother," and that she "looked like a little witch, with her bones all sticking through her skin, and eyes as big as saucers staring out of a thin, brown little face."

It was Abel who devoted himself to her then, who brought her candy and toys, who drew her on her sled, while he skated, for hours, unwearied; who went miles to get the first maple sugar and the first walnuts for her, who was her willing slave, in short, and tyrannized over as such, by the spoiled mite, who thought the sole purpose of his creation was to minister to her happiness. Then Dr. Bob had heaped scorn on the head of his brother for his devotion to "that ugly little imp," had called him "a milksop," and wondered "why, if he wanted to adopt a baby, he didn't find a decent-looking one. Miss Kitty's mother had died when she was twelve, and she had been sent away to boarding school. Now she had returned a young lady of eighteen, and blossomed into that astonishing beauty which thin, dark, large-eyed children often attain in womanhood; and behold what a change! It was Dr. Bob who was now her slave; Dr. Abel who held himself aloof, and seemed scarcely conscious of her existence.

She showed herself to be of a very forgiving disposition, taking all Dr. Bob's attentions kindly, and never reminding him of the lack of appreciation of her charms which he has shown in the old times.

Now Dr. Bob rarely remembered to make a tender speech to his former flames. He was devoted to Kitty, heart and soul. The gossips said that it was evident that his time had come, and that it would be a very good match, and that was precisely the conclusion to which Dr. Bob had come.

The only difficulty in the way seemed to be the very common one which expressed in homely parlance is, "It takes two to make a bargain." There was about Kitty a *je ne sais quoi* which kept him at his distance, at the same time that it allured him. She accepted all his invitations, and was as frank and friendly with him as possible; rather too frank and friendly for his taste, he would have liked to see her blush at his coming, and cast down her eyes at his tender looks and words, instead of laughing merrily or pretending not to understand, as she did. He was almost afraid, sometimes, that she did not care for him—though it did seem a prosperous idea that any girl shouldn't! Dr. Bob was fully aware of his own attractions, and that was as much the fault of the young ladies as it was his own.

He tried his best to find an opportunity to make her say yes or no, squarely; but she always managed to evade it. He came to the conclusion that she was a coquette, and that she liked to trifle with and tease him, meaning of course to say yes after a while. It hurt his pride to have to bear this, but after all it was a refreshing change from the numerous young ladies who were too evidently all ready to say "Yes, and thank you." And then Kitty was worth a good deal of time and trouble.

One day in May, Dr. Bob rode up to Squire King's, determined to "have it out," with Kitty. At a Petrolia ball, the night before, she had flirted entirely too much with a handsome "oil prince," who had just made his appearance in the neighborhood. Jealousy had brought him to a very savage state of mind. He was not going to be at the mercy of any girls caprices, he said to himself, emphasizing it very strongly.

The possibility of his getting a downright no for an answer did not even occur to him. If she was not as much in love with him as he could wish, she would not surely be so foolish as to refuse the best match in the county! As for her shilly-shallying, he would bear it no longer. He found Kitty alone for a wonder; if her Aunt Julia wasn't in the way she usually had some young lady visiting her, she seemed to have remarkable skill in preventing him from seeing her alone.

Thanking his stars for his good luck, he lost no time in making known his errand. He had made her enough tender speeches, which she laughed at or evaded as if they were of no account. Now he meant to go straight to the point.

She was embroidering fans and horse-shoes on Turkish toweling—for fashion reigns even in the oil region—and seemed too much absorbed to do any more than give him a careless greeting. Dr. Bob was not to be deterred from his undertaking by that.

"Kitty, when am I going to have my wife?" he asked, with somewhat less assurance in his manner than in his words—to his credit be it said.

"Your wife?" asked Miss Kitty, looking up with every appearance of genuine astonishment. "Who is she? I didn't know you had one!"

"I am going to have one as soon as I can get her," said Dr. Bob, somewhat taken aback, but resolved to carry his point at any cost.

"That's another thing," said Miss Kitty, returning to her embroidery with great coolness.

"Kitty, you know how much I love you," pleaded Dr. Bob.

"I know a great many useless and undesirable things. Sometimes I feel like the man in Pittsburgh, who said he had five thousand dollars' worth more of knowledge than he should ever use!" said Miss Kitty, primly.

"Kitty, if I don't have you for my wife I shall never have any other woman."

"Oh, maybe somebody would have you. At all events it wouldn't be so bad to be an old bachelor."

"I believe you are perfectly heartless."

"That has been proved to be a scientific impossibility."

"Seriously, Kitty, I think this trifling has gone on long enough."

"I quite agree with you that this trifling has gone on long enough. It doesn't so much matter when it is with girls in your own station—they all understand you, and you won't break their hearts; but when it comes to making love to poor little Polly Hendricks, the miner's daughter, I think it is a shame!"

Dr. Bob's face flamed. How had she heard that story, which he had tried so carefully to keep hidden from her? Clearly, she did not know how bad it was,—that Polly Hendricks had gone away from home nobody—except Dr. Bob—knew where; if she had she would not had spoken of it so openly and so lightly. Dr. Bob understood that his real wickedness was beyond Kitty's comprehension. It was still possible to make light of Polly Hendricks's affairs, and he was all the more anxious to obtain Kitty's promise now.

"I don't suppose it's any harm for a man to be civil to the young ladies of his acquaintance. I never made love to any girl but you in my life, Kitty."

"Do try somebody else!"

"Kitty, you don't—you can't mean that? You do like me a little?"

"I like you a good deal, but"——

As the Fates would have it, the door opened just at that minute, and Aunt Julia came in.

Dr. Bob took his hat and rushed off, almost, not quite, despairing. She had confessed that she liked him a good deal,—that was better that nothing.

The next day Dr. Abel was sent for from Squire King's; Kitty had a sore throat, and they feared diphtheria. For the first time Dr. Bob regretted that he had not attended to his profession. It proved to be diphtheria, and a long and painful illness followed. Dr. Abel was assiduous in his attentions. Dr. Bob was moved to thank him for it several times, and on the day when she was declared to be out of danger, he became effusive in his demonstrations of gratitude.

"Do you love her so much, Bob?" asked Dr. Abel in a queer, husky voice.

"I do love her, Abe, that is true, but that isn't all! My luck has turned, as you know, and it has got to that now, that I must have some money. Kitty has got the pile that her mother left her, and the squire will come down handsomely to his only child! I must have her, Abe; do you say a good word for me if you can! They think a great deal of you at the squire's."

Dr. Abel colored to the roots of his scant reddish hair.

"I don't quite like the idea of any man's marrying Kitty for her money," he said.

"Good gracious, man! I'd marry her without a cent—if I could afford it. But a man in my situation can't afford to overlook a hundred thousand or two. I couldn't take her if she were poor, and, just now, of course, I do think more of money than I do of her. But I sha'n't abuse her when once I get her."

Dr. Abel said nothing; he was looking at vacancy.

"I want you to help me!" said Dr. Bob rather irritably.

"I am glad to help you with money as far as I can," said Dr. Abel.

"I've got too much of your money now, Abe. And all you've got left wouldn't be much compared with the squire's fortune. Kit's the best thing for me, Abe,—to marry Kitty! I can't see why the idea doesn't suit you. I shall begin to think you want her yourself!"

This was such a good joke that Dr. Bob laughed heartily at it, even in his present

disturbed and irritable frame of mind. Dr. Abel walked to the window and looked out. Apparently he did not think the jest worth replying to; but a close observer might have seen that his face had grown pale, and his teeth were tightly set.

He went out without another word.

"Abe has such Quixotic notions! I don't believe he would marry a woman who had a penny! Well, he's a good fellow, a great deal better than I am; but he'll never get any woman to think so!" And Dr. Bob regarded his handsome person in the mirror, with great complacency.

Dr. Abel found his patient sitting up, for the first time, that day, and with a faint tinge of returning bloom on her cheek.

"You'll get on without me now. I sha'n't have to come again," he said rather brusquely.

"Is it such a trial to you to come to see me? You used to come often, when I was a little girl, before I went away!" And though she tried to speak lightly and carelessly, the tinge of color on Miss Kitty's cheek grew to a rosy red.

Dr. Abel colored too; but he turned away that it might not be seen, and said after a moment's pause:—

"I told Bob I thought he might come up this afternoon."

"Bob isn't you," said Miss Kitty.

Dr. Abel fled, then, as if for his life. He felt as if he were suffocating—with delight. His heart beat so that he could hear it, and he actually smiled. It was not altogether the words but the tone in which she said them—the charming pout, the bewitching blush, that accompanied them. What could she mean? Was this a specimen of woman's coquetry? Dr. Abel decided that there was but one course for him to pursue—to put Kitty King resolutely out of his mind.

When Dr. Bob called on Kitty, that afternoon, he found her Aunt Jane with her, and it was impossible to turn Aunt Jane out. She seemed to have developed new ideas of her duty as a chaperon. And he found the same state of things every time that he went there. He could not help harboring a dreadful suspicion that Aunt Jane's new line of conduct had been suggested by Kitty.

Dr. Abel went near her no more. Several times his horse's head had been turned, as if involuntarily, in that direction, but he always turned him resolutely back again before the house was reached.

"Kitty, you will go to Captain Legare's picnic with me?" said Dr. Bob, one day in June. His affairs had grown worse and worse, and he had grown desperate. But Aunt Jane never went to picnics, and it is the fashion in the oil region for young ladies to go with only an attendant cavalier. If he could prevail upon Kitty to go with him, this time, there would be some chance of his getting her to say yes to his proposal, he thought.

Kitty reflected a moment. She did want to go to the picnic; everybody went. Captain Legare was a retired Mississippi steamboat captain, as jolly and social as steamboat captains (off duty) are apt to be; he had "struck oil," and he liked to spend his money in having a good time with his neighbors. He gave indoor parties in the winter, and grove parties—not being blessed with a lawn—in the summer; they were always grand affairs, and to stay away from one involved an amount of self-sacrifice to which Kitty was not equal.

She said yes; and Dr. Bob went home with a lighter heart than he had had for months. But when the day came, and he appeared at Squire King's door, there was Rosa Brett, a fourteen-year-old cousin of Kitty's—a pert child whom he couldn't endure—all ready to go with them. Kitty "knew he wouldn't mind taking Rosa, too." She said it in a manner of sweet simplicity, but with a mischievous twinkle in her eyes that fairly exasperated Dr. Bob.

Kitty was a favorite with everybody, and of course he couldn't keep her to himself at the picnic, especially when she was determined to avoid him. To everybody's great surprise Dr. Abel made his appearance at the picnic. It was very seldom that he favored a social gathering with his presence, and it was especially surprising to see him in the daytime, when he might be supposed to have professional duties to attend to. Two things everybody was sure of, Dr. Abel had not neglected his patients to come, and that there must have been some strong attraction to draw him. Managing mammas began to reflect that he had means, and a good position, and was game that might be brought down, after all. And if he was not as handsome and popular as Dr. Bob, he was far more steady and reliable.

Whenever Kitty looked in his direction, she found his eyes fixed on hers. But to watch her from afar off seemed to be all his desire; he didn't come near.

Late in the afternoon, Kitty, tired of dancing, for she had not yet fully recovered her strength, hid herself from the others in the shadow of a great tree, to rest. But suddenly she observed that Dr. Bob was making his way toward her hiding-place. He must have watched her as she went, or else have caught a glimpse of her dress through the foliage. Kitty resolved that she had not escaped him to be caught now! She started up, and made a little *detour* through the bushes, taking care that she was screened from observation. She hurried on, thinking only of escaping his unwelcome wooing, until drops of rain falling on her hand startled her. Coming out into an open field she found that the sky overhead had become black. There were mutterings of thunder in the distance. Now Kitty was not a coward, generally speaking, but there were two things of which she acknowledged to be afraid, thunder and cows. And to add to the discomforts of the situation, a dozen or two of the terrible animals were feeding in the field into which she had come. To return, as she had come, was not to be thought of; she was not sure by any means that she could find her way, and if she could, Dr. Bob was an evil which she dreaded almost as much as thunder and cows! But the rain had begun to pour in torrents; she could not stay there.

A happy thought struck her, the mines! The field in which she found herself was at the foot of Walnut Hill; and into the heart of the hill ran two or three old disused mines. The opening of one was only a few rod from her, and the cows were not near it. She did remember, vaguely; having heard that it was not safe to go into them, the timbers which roofed them having given way in several places, and masses of earth and ore being likely to fall in at any time. But the continued rattling of the thunder and vivid flashes of lightning terrified her so that she did not stop to think of any other possible danger, but ran into the mine, which seemed a delightful shelter. The only drawbacks were that it was extremely wet under her feet—as mines almost always are—and the sensation of loneliness was rather awful. She advanced far enough into the darkness of the mine to be out of reach of the pelting rain, but not so far but that the lightning flashes illuminated her shelter, now and then. One of them revealed a figure standing in the opening. Kitty's heart beat hard with fear, but the next moment a voice calling her name, in anxious tones, showed her that her visitor was not a stranger. It was Dr. Abel's voice.

"Here I am, in the mine! O Dr. Abel! you do look so funny! You are so awful wet!" And ungrateful Kitty burst into a peal of laughter, notwithstanding her melancholy situation.

Dr. Abel was very wet, indeed, and he did look rather "funny." He was without his hat, and little rills were running from his hair. His collar was drooping, limp and starchless, and his face wore a rather comical look of anxiety and dismay. But Kitty's laugh became a little hysterical. She was so glad to see him!—if he had the faintest idea how glad she was he would not have minded her laughing. She was not afraid of the darkness and gloom of the mine, nor even of thunder and cows, with Dr. Abel's arm to lean upon.

"How did you happen to find me?" she asked him.

"I saw you go," said Dr. Abel, and he was glad that it was so dark that she couldn't see him blush, "and I followed you because I saw that it was going to rain. As your physician it was my duty not to let you get wet if I could help it."

Kitty did wish that he wouldn't be always talking about being her physician, as if he couldn't possibly have any other interest in her. She wanted to tell him so; but he couldn't fail to know just what she meant, and it would be too dreadful to be "the woman who dared."

"We must go back just as soon as possible," said Dr. Abel in a rather severe tone, just as soon. "They will be so anxious about you. Bob was looking for you."

"Why do you always talk to me about Bob?" said Kitty pettishly.

"Because—he—he thinks a great deal of you," stammered poor Dr. Abel.

"Isn't there anybody else in the world who thinks a great deal of me?"

I don't think Kitty realized quite how much that—words and accent together—told. Dr. Abel's heart gave a great leap. He had got the idea into his head that loyalty to his brother required him to give up all hope of winning her, even though Bob did think too much of her money. But if she didn't love Bob, and did love him!

"Kitty—Kitty, do you know what you are

making me think? I couldn't bear to be trifled with. Could you love a stupid, homely, sober old fellow like me?"

"You are the cleverest, handsomest, dearest old fellow in the world to me! I never loved anybody but you, and I have loved you ever since I was six years old! How could you be such a goose as not to know it?"

That thunder shower lasted over an hour but as the dirty, gloomy, dangerous old mine was tansformed into paradise for that length of time it didn't matter.

Dr. Bob went off to the Black Hill, and shot Indians and bison, and made another fortune, and a report reached home that he had hunted up Polly Hendricks and married her.

Some people think it strange that Dr. Abel has turned out to be the great man of the country, after all, and poor Dr. Bob should have gone away in disgrace. For Dr. Abel since he married Kitty King has made rapid strides in popular favor. He has come out of his shell, as it were. His wife—who has picked up a little Darwinism—say it all means "the survival of the fittest." She says her husband has but two failings—too little self-esteem, and too much admiration for his brother Bob.

A REMARKABLE CASE.

By Guy Ainslee.

AN aged friend has related to us the following case of a conviction for murder, while the parties were, in fact, innocent, and no murder had been committed, which is one of the most remarkable in the history of the world.

It happened, as will be learned from a persual of it, in Vermont, in 1819, and its singular denouement excited extraordinary attention at the time.

We invite for it a careful reading.

Mr. Barna Boorn and his aged partner were respectable inhabitants of Manchester, in the state of Vermont. They were the parents of one son and two daughters, beside the unhappy Stephen and Jesse, who figure in the story we are about to relate.

Sally, one of the daughters, became the wife of Russell Colvin, by whom she became the mother of several children, all of whom were dispersed among the relatives, owing to the mental derangement of their father, which rendered him incapable of attending to his family concerns, and providing for their necessary support.

Mr. Colvin was in the habit of frequently absenting himself without giving any previous information, and rambling in various parts of the country. At one time he was absent nine or ten months, after which he was found in the State of Rhode Island.

About eleven years after his marriage to Miss Boorn he was again missing, which at the time caused little or no alarm, as it was expected he would return as on former occasions. But after a lapse of several years, nothing having been heard of him, surmises were circulated that he had been murdered; the suspicion rested upon his brothers-in-law, Stephen and Jesse Boorn, as his murderers. This suspicion was caused by a reference to the frequent altercations that had taken place between Colvin and these Boorn brothers previous to the disappearance of the former, and to some unguarded expressions of the latter, afterwards intimating that Colvin was dead, and by their occasionally showing signs of compunction.

A Mr. Boorn, uncle to Stephen and Jesse, a gentleman of respectability and unimpeachable character, dreamed that Russell Colvin came to his bedside, and told him that he had been murdered, and he must follow him to the spot where he was buried. This was repeated three times. The deposit was a place talked of previous to the dream, which was where a house had formerly stood, and under it was a hole about four feet square, which was made for the purpose of burying potatoes, and then filled up. This pit was opened and nothing discovered but a large knife, a penknife and a button. Mrs. Colvin, anterior to their being presented to her described them accurately, and, on seeing them, said they

belonged to her husband excepting the small knife.

A lad was walking from Mr. Barna Boorn's at a small distance, with his dog, and a hollow stump standing near the path engaged the notice of the spaniel, which ran to the place and back again several times, and lifted up his feet on the boy, with whining notes, as though to draw the attention of his little master to the place, which had the effect. A cluster of bones was drawn from the roots of the stump by the dogs paws. Further examination was made, and in the cavity of the stump were found two toenails, to appearances belonging to a human foot, others were discovered in a crumbled state, which to appearances had passed through fire. It was now concluded by many that some fragments of Russell Colvin were found. The cluster of bones were brought before the court of inquiry. They were examined by a number of physicians, who thought them to be human. A Mr. Sailsbury about four years before had had a leg amputated which was buried a short distance away. The limb was dug up, and, by comparing them, it was universally determined that the bones were not human, and so they appeared to all beholders. The bones were in some degree pulverized, but some pieces were in a tolerable state of preservation. Suspicions were excited that the body was burned and some part not consumed cast into a stump and other bones put among them for deception. Some time after the departure of Colvin, a barn belonging to Mr. Boorn was consumed by fire accidentally, it was conjectured that the body was taken up and concealed under the barn and mostly consumed. About that time a log heap was burnt by the Boorns, near the place where the body was supposed to be deposited, it was thought by some to be cremated there.

The subject occupied the attention of almost every mind in the neighborhood. It seemed as if the age of ghosts and hobgoblins had revived, and that every house was haunted by the ghost of Colvin. At length, the murdered Colvin actually appeared in a dream to a connection of the Boorns, and declared that he had been murdered by them, and pointed out the place where he was buried.

Upon this miraculous revelation, all the human passions were called into operation. Everybody rushed forth to behold the bones of Colvin; the valleys poured forth groups of wandering men and women, not a few; the mountaineers descended from the rugged sides of the mountains to gaze, with trembling awe and solicitude, upon the bones of Colvin, timid females and men who think and act like nervous old women, undoubtedly from the effect of a disturbed imagination, saw the ghost of Colvin flitting across the declivities of the green hills, or walking with solemn steps around the fields. All was consternation. Every mouth was ready to exclaim murder!

Previous to the general excitement, Stephen Boorn, with his family, moved to New York, about a hundred miles from the place of his nativity, where they were comfortably settled, while Jesse remained in Manchester where he was arrested, and frequently brought before the court of inquiry. He at first boldly asserted his innocence, but after several days' confinement; and every art made use of to induce him to criminate himself and his brother, and, being told that a confession would probably be the means of obtaining his liberty, and, strange it may appear, he did confess that his brother Stephen told him that he (Stephen) had given Colvin a blow, and had laid him aside where no one could find him. Upon this, the authorities issued a warrant to apprehend Stephen. Captain Trueman Hill, grandjuryman for the town of Manchester, Squire Raymond, and Mr. R. Anderson, set out for Denmark, New York, and arrived in three days. They called on Mr. Eleazer S. Slyvester, innkeeper, who, in the night, together with Mr. Orange Clark and a Mr. Hooper, belonging to the town, accompanied them to the house of the supposed criminal. Mr. Clark went in first, and began the conversation about temporal concerns, the others surrounded the house, and he was easily taken. The surprise and distress of Mrs. Boorn, on this occasion, is not easily described; it excited the compassion of those who came to take her husband away, and they made her some presents. The prisoner was put in irons, and brought to Manchester, he peremptorily asserted his innocence, and declared that he knew nothing whatever of the murder of his brother-in-law.

The prisoners were kept apart for a time, and assigned to separate cells. Nothing material transpired, and they were confined in one room. Stephen denied the evidence

brought against him by Jesse, and treated him with much severity. Both the prisoners were repeatedly admonished to pay the strictest regard to truth.

Many days were taken in public examination of the reputed criminals. Circumstantial evidence was brought forward which was much against them, and they were bound over to await their trial at the sitting of the supreme court to be held in Manchester the third Tuesday of September, 1819.

Jesse Boorn, after an interview with his brother, denied that Stephen ever told him that what he reported about him was false. For a time, they both continued to assert their innocence; but being told that they would undoubtedly be convicted upon the testimony already against them, and hopes of pardon being held out if they would confess the crime. at last Stephen wrote out a statement of what he said were facts; in which he acknowledged he killed Colvin, deposited him in the place where the knife and button were found, and took the bones from that place, and put them under his father's barn, which was soon after burnt, and the body consumed.

A person in jail with them for perjury testified to a full confession of the murder, made to him by Stephen and Jesse; and it was so artfully framed, so corroborated with other facts, that it had great weight with the court and jury, though it was wholly false. But he had his desire answered, he got bail, and went off.

During the interval the prisoners were frequently visited by Reverend Mr. Haynes, in his official capacity, but they did not discover any symptoms of compunction, persisting in declaring their innocence, with appeals to heaven. Stephen particularly, at times, appeared absorbed in passion and impatience. One day, Mr. Haynes introduced the example of Christ under sufferings, as a pattern worthy of imitation.

"I am as innocent as Jesus Christ!" cried Stephen, for which extravagant expression being reproved, he replied, "I don't mean that I am guiltless as he was. I know that I am a great sinner, but I am as innocent of killing Colvin as he was."

The court sat in September, and a judicious and impressive charge was given to the grand jury by his Honor Judge Doolittle, and a bill of indictment was preferred against Stephen and Jesse Boorn, but as it was not a full court, the trial could not commence.

The court was accordingly adjourned to the twenty-sixth of October, 1819. It was with much difficulty that a jury was obtained, but few could be found who had not expressed their opinion against the prisoners. Mr. C. Sheldon was employed in behalf of the State. The counsel on both sides displayed much zeal and ability. The trial commenced on Tuesday, the twenty-seventh of October, and continued until the Saturday night following.

An indictment was presented containing a charge against Stephen and Jesse Boorn, for the murder of Russell Colvin, to which they pleaded "not guilty." The occasion excited uncommon interest. Six hundred people attended each day before the trial.

Before the introduction of any testimony, Mr. Skinner made a motion, that as the prisoners had pleaded severally "not guilty," they might be allowed to separate trials.

The court ruled that Stephen and Jesse Boorn should be jointly tried for the murder of Russell Colvin.

About fifty witnesses were successfully examined, but as they were only corroborative of each other, all tending to prove the leading facts, too voluminous for this brief sketch, none but the principal testimony will here be introduced.

Thomas Johnson, being sworn, said:—

I was a neighbor to the Boorns and Colvin. In the early part of the month of May, seven years ago last spring, I saw one morning, Stephen Boorn, Jesse Boorn, Russell Colvin, and his son, Lewis Colvin, picking up stones. They appeared to be in a quarrel. I had a full view of them, although they could not see me. I have never seen Russell since. Stephen said he was not in the field picking stones when Colvin went off, but that he went off at that time. Jesse while in prison told me that he was assisting in shoeing a horse when Colvin went off. Stephen said the woodchuck they had the day Colvin went off was killed by him when mending a fence for Mr. Hammond. Having purchased the land where this quarrel took place, the children found and brought home an old moldy, rotten hat which I knew to be the property of Russell Colvin. In the cellar-hole stood a thrifty apple-tree about three feet high, which was taken away the season after I noticed it.

Lewis Colvin, son of Russell Colvin, said

that at the time Colvin went away, he was picking stones with him and Stephen and Jesse Boorn; that a quarrel arose between Stephen and Colvin, that Colvin struck Stephen first; Stephen knocked Colvin down with a club, and that he (the witness) ran away and saw no blood; that Stephen told him not to tell that he struck Colvin, and that he had never seen Colvin since.

Thomas Hill stated that he had the keys of the prison in which the Boorns were imprisoned, that he exhorted Jesse to tell the truth, and that if he told a falsehood it would increase his troubles; that he confessed that the knife and hat of Colvin were shown; he was afraid that Stephen had murdered Colvin, and that he believed he knew very near where the body was buried, and appeared much agitated. He said he urged Jesse to confess nothing but the truth.

Sally Colvin, wife of Russell Colvin and sister to the Boorns, stated that about four years previous Stephen said that he knew Colvin was dead.

Daniel D. Baldwin and Mrs. Baldwin, to the same effect, said that about three years before Stephen told them that Colvin went off in a strange manner into the woods, at the time Jesse, Colvin, and Lewis were picking up stones; that Lewis had gone for a drink, and when he asked them where Colvin was gone, one answered, "gone to hell," the other, "that they had put him where the potatoes would not freeze."

Numerous witnesses testified to the contradictory declarations of the Boorns in regard to the disappearance or death of Colvin. But the testimony of Silas Merill, to the confession of Jesse Boorn, was perhaps the most extraordinary feature of the trial. He testified that as Jesse was returned to prison from the court of inquiry, he had been urged to confess; that one night, in the prison, they got up, Jesse said that Stephen knocked Colvin down twice, broke his skull, and the blood gushed out, that his father came in, that all of them took his body, and put it into the old cellar, where father cut his throat; that he knew the jack-knife to be Colvin's; that Stephen wore Colvin's shoes; that about a year and a half after they took the bones up, put them under the barn that was burnt, then pounded them up, and flung them into the river; that father put some of them into a stump.

Much evidence was introduced which was rejected by the court, as being irreverent. The case was given to the jury after a short, judicious and impressive charge by his honor, Judge Doolittle, which was followed by a lengthy and appropriate one by Judge Chase. The jury retired, and within about one hour returned, and, in compliance with a request of Mr. Skinner's, they were severally inquired of whether they had agreed upon a verdict; and each solemnly declared that they had found both prisoners guilty of the murder charged against them. The verdict was then publicly read by the clerk. After a short recess, his honor Judge Chase, with the most tender and sympathetic emotion which he was unable to suppress, pronounced the awful sentence that the criminals be remanded back to prison, and on the twenty-eighth day of January, between the hours of ten and two o'clock, they should be hung by the neck till they were dead, praying the Lord to have mercy on their souls.

None can express the confusion and anguish into which the prisoners were cast on hearing their doom. They requested, by their counsels, liberty to speak, which was granted. In sighs and broken accents they asserted their innocence. The convulsion of nature attending Stephen was as great as to render him unable to walk, but he was supported by others, and carried to prison. The compassion of some was excited especially toward Jesse, which inclined them immediately to send a petition to the Legislature, then sitting at Montpelier, praying that the punishment of the criminals might be commuted to imprisonment for life. But few, however, signed the petition in favor of Stephen. The assembly spent several days on the subject, and finally granted the request of Jesse, yeas one hundred and four, nays thirty-one. The request of Stephen was negatived in the House, yeas forty-five, nays ninety-seven. The decision of the assembly was brought to Manchester by his Excellency, Governor Galusha, and immediately communicated to the prisoners. Jesse received the news with peculiar satisfaction, while Stephen was greatly depressed, being wholly without hope. Jesse lamented that his brother could not share the same comparative blessing with him, and that they could not be fellow-prisoners together.

Little did the brothers think that the fate of Stephen would terminate more favorably than that of Jesse, and be the cause of a

more speedy deliverance. It is often the case that the darkest dispensations of Divine Providence are presages to the rising morning. This should teach us always to trust in the Lord and consider that although clouds and darkness are around about us, yet justice and judgement are the habitation of his throne.

On the twenty-ninth day of October, Jesse took a final farewell of his brother, of his friends, and family, at Manchester, and was carried to the state prison, expecting to spend the remainder of his life there. None can express the melancholy situation of Stephen, the poor prisoner, separated from his wife and children, parents and friends, under the sentence of death, without hope. Mr. Haynes visited him frequently, with sympathy and grief, and endeavored to turn his mind to the things of another world, telling him that as all human means had failed he must look to God as the only way of deliverance. He advised him to read the holy Scriptures, to which he consented if he could be allowed a candle, as his cell was dark. This request was granted, and he was often found reading, being at times calm, and again impatient. The interview of Mr. Haynes with him, a few days before the news came that it was likely that Colvin was alive, was very affecting.

One day he said to Mr. Haynes:—

"I see no way but I must die! Everything works against me; but I am an innocent man; this you will know when I am dead." He burst into a flood of tears, and said, "What will become of my poor wife and children! They are in needy circumstances, and I love them better than life itself." Mr. Haynes told him that God would take care of them. He replied, "I don't want to die, I wish they could let me live, even in this situation, some time longer, perhaps something will convince the people that I am innocent." Mr. Haynes was about to leave the prison, when he said, "Will you pray for me?"

He arose with his heavy chains on his hands and legs, being also chained down to the floor, and stood on his feet during the prayer.

Mr. Taber Chadwick, of Shrewsbury, Monmouth County, New Jersey, brother-in-law of Mr. William Polhamus, of Dover in the same State, where Colvin had been living ever since April, 1813, seeing the account of the trial of the Boorns, at Manchester, wrote that Colvin was still alive, and with his brother-in-law, Polhamus, in Dover, forty miles from Shrewsbury. When the letter came to town, every one was struck with consternation. A few partly believed, but the main doubted.

"It cannot be that Colvin is alive," was the general cry. Mr. Chadwick's letter was carried to the prison, and read to Stephen. The news was so overpowering that to use his own language, "Nature could scarcely sustain the shock," but as there was some doubt as to the truth of this report it tended to prevent an immediate dissolution.

He observed "that he believed had Colvin then made his appearance it would have caused his immediate death. Even now a faintness was created that was painful to endure." Soon a letter was received from New York, stating that the man, who was supposed to be murdered, was probably still alive, and that Mr. Whelply, formerly of Manchester, and who was intimately acquainted with Colvin, had actually gone to New Jersey in quest of him. Thus there was increasing evidence in confirmation of the letter. As soon as Mr. Whelply had returned to New York, he immediately wrote, "that he had Colvin with him." A New York paper announced his arrival also, and that he would soon set out for Vermont. Notwithstanding all this, many gave no credit to the report, but considered it mere deception. Large bets were made.

Colvin was unwilling to return to Vermont with Mr. Whelply, who was obliged to have recourse to stratagem. A young lady of Colvin's acquaintance agreed to accompany him, pretending that she only designed to make a visit to New York. While there she was missing, which excited some uneasiness in the mind of the exile. While staying a few days in New York, to prevent his returning, Mr. Whelply told him there were British men-of-war lying in the harbor, and, unless he kept within doors, he would be kidnapped. This had the desired effect. Colvin, when he set out for Manchester, concluded he was on his way to New Jersey, and never perceived the deception until he came to Bennington, where he arrived on the twenty-second of December, and saw many people with whom he had formerly been acquainted, which filled him with surprise.

The county court being in session, all were filled with astonishment and surprise.

The court suspended business for some hours to gaze upon one who in one sense had been dead and was alive again. Many who formerly knew him then saw that there could be no deception. Colvin could call many of them by name. Toward evening the same day he came to Manchester; notice being given that he was at hand, a cry was heard, "Colvin has come!"

The stage was driven swiftly, and a signal extended; it was all bustle and confusion. The stage stopped at Captain Black's inn.

The village was all alive. All were running to obtain sight of a man, whom they had no doubt was dead, and had come as a kind of saviour to one who was devoted to the gallows. Some, like Thomas of old, would not believe without tangible evidence. People gathered around him with such eagerness as to render it impossible to press through the crowd or obtain a sight of him. Almost all old acquaintances he could recognize and call by name.

Several guns were discharged; people ran to different parts of the town to give notice. The prison door was unbolted, and the news proclaimed to Stephen that Colvin had come. The welcome reception given it by the joyful prisoner need not be mentioned. The chains on his arms were taken off, while those on his legs remained, being impatient for an interview with him who had come to bring him salvation, and so they met. Colvin gazed upon the chains, and asked:—

"What is that for?"

Stephen answered:—

"Because they say I murdered you."

Colvin replied:—

"You have never hurt me."

Stephen's wife and friends, and people from every part of the town, were collected. Joy and gladness sat on every countenance. Many shouts of rejoicing were heard, together with the discharge of cannon. The news having spread that Colvin had returned to Manchester, the next day there was a large collection from the neighboring towns, who met to behold the returned exile, and to express their high satisfaction in the occasion, Scarcely ever was seen more exaltation of tender sympathy than on that day. Not less than fifty cannons were discharged, and at a seasonable hour they returned to their places of abode. Mrs. Colvin came to see her husband, but he took but little notice of her, intimating that she did not belong to him. Some of his children came to see him, of whom he appeared fond. He wondered how they came there, as he said, "he left them in New Jersey, and must take them back."

He fancied he was the owner of Mr. Polhamus's farm, in Dover, and talked much about his property there. It was observed by those that formerly knew him, that his mental derangement was much greater than when he left Manchester. Many things that took place years before, he could recollect with accuracy, and describe with a degree of propriety. He manifested a placid and harmless disposition. The family with whom he resided in New Jersey, being fond of him, wished him to return and spend his days with them, of which he seemed very desirous. Accordingly, on the nineteenth day of December, he set out from Manchester; with Mr. Whelply, for New York, who engaged to convey him thence to his former habitation in New Jersey, having received renumeration from the town for that purpose.

Stephen was restored at once to his family, and Jesse was liberated as soon as circumstances would admit. Why they had given such testimony, and conducted themselves so strangely in this singular affair ever remained a mystery.

He that is of reason's skill bereft,
And wants the staff of wisdom him to stay,
Is like a ship in midst of tempest left,
Without a helm or pilot her to sway:
Full sad and dreadful is that ship's event;
So is the man that wants intendiment.—Spenser.

SPANISH CASTLES.

By William Arch. McClean.

THERE are dreams and dreams. Phantoms of the shades of night, visions at rosy noonday, fairies of dreamland, children of morn, sprites of star-beams, creations warm as sun-beams, vagaries of Morpheus, living, lofty loved ideals. Dreaming we live, living we dream. Is there a life cursed with the want of longing? Something better, not as you see it, or I see it, but as each one sees it for one'self. Each dreams his own dreams according to his own fashion. Yon hod-carriers tells his secret as he descends the ladder, muttering, "give me a trowel and I'll build a better wall than that mason," whose unintelligelible yell he had just answered. Yonder mason with the trowel weaves in with the brick and mortar, the visions of plans of buildings he would draft as an architect. The architect views a far off the looming spectre of a temple of great architectural beauty he would raise with a master's hand. It is left alone to the Alexanders to sigh no more worlds to conquor. Life is blessed with an upward impetus given it by dreams, though morning is afar off. At length dawn breaks, the Alexanders awake to sigh, the dreamers dream on.

"Richard Reed. Attorney at Law," is the emblem which is confronted on the frame of a door of an office in a Pennsylvania town. Reed, has the name no familiar sound? Has it the jingle of no memory? Ah, it smacks of legal lore and recollections, a race born with the breath of the "said" and the "aforesaids" in their mouths. Which Richard Reed is this, father, son or grandson? Perchance it is the face and form of the father that memory calls up, a man of commanding appearance, with a large head, crowned with a forehead eloquent with strength, an eye of calm expression except when sent with its piercing lightning glance upon some poor unfortunate, and a gifted tongue. Or perhaps it is the son, the facsimile of the father but of lighter build, the student, within whose brain is stowed citations and authorities on almost any legal point on which he may be questioned. Memory lists not to the tick, tick of passing time. Come, enter the office when this story opens and see which Richard Reed this is. A cursory glance reveals an uncarpeted floor, bare walls except where lined with shelves of somber volumes, a number of hard wooden chairs, and a desk, on which are scattered numerous papers, and behind which sits a youth of twenty-two winters. A slender boyish face, with large thoughtful blue eyes, and a mouth of a sensitive mould, is lifted to that of the intruder. Inquired whether Richard Reed was expected to be in his office soon, and that same youth, with a smile, at the same time reassuring and confusing, replies. "I am he." It is the grandson. Father and grandfather had added their mite of experience and knowledge to that of the world, he had his yet to add.

Richard Reed is at this time speedily slipping towards the end of the first years of his legal practice. When pondering over the selection of a profession, the nearest road to the goal of the almighty dollar drowned all questions of tastes and adaptability and he passively followed whether the hand of fate seemed to lead, the law coming to him and not he to it. The law in the past year to a great extent proved a congenial comparsion. The contemplation of the events of the past months contained much satisfaction, with no more petty annoyances scattered through them here and there than any other mode of living or occupation would have had. The relation of law to civilized humanity, the potent factor it had been in its evolution, the preserver now of its rights and liberties, were to Richard Reed grand themes to dwell upon, yet down in the depths of his being a dream struggled for life. There was an intermission between the end of his father's and the beginning of his practice, hence clients were scarce this year, playing shy, waiting to see of what manner of metal the new Richard Reed might be. This unemployed time gave courage and hope to that dream and e're long the sway of its scepter found a willing vassal in his mind, heart and soul.

Come tell us what is life and why it is worth the living, oh, dream? See, it crys, see the *summon bonum* of existence reached

while I paint the world, and humanity in rich royal colors. Dip the pen of a legal parentage, into this fluid of a rich hue and write, write a story of man for man. Write of hearts now beating with joy, now broken with pain, of minds, grappling with hereditary powers of darknesses, and groping on towards light, of tempted souls struggling upwards. Waft your winged words unto the uttermost ends of the earth, and live, live forever. Ah, the world will read and forget, forget the author and in time the story, yet in that thy story lived, it has immortality. Your thoughts become those of humanity, the seal of your heart and soul is stamped on your words and are received into the breasts of all men, bid the world forget if it can. Thy gift to the world is a legacy, freely inheritable. Time passes on, a poor, neglected, forgotten grave marks where thy bones lie, but not thy thoughts, heart, soul, thyself, so grieve not. Behold a later man speak a new thought, born, evolved from an old one, and that thine own, just as thine had been built upon a preceding one, so rolls on immortality of thought. What cares the world whether the singer died in a mad-house or his bones lie bleak on some desert, it is his soul in his song it loves, a love which lives as long as a snatch of that song remains. Give away to thy dream, mortal.

With pen obedient to the guidance of his visions, Richard Reed writes day after day, at last he has finished his first story. One morning in the month of May, a few weeks after its completion, he can be seen busily engaged at his desk, pen in hand. It is not an elaborate brief the pages of which he turns and returns and lingers over. It is that same story he is prudently prunning, a stroke of the pen here, a word there, so it goes on minute after minute while the sun slowly slips towards the zenith. At last he folds up the manuscript with a sigh of mingled pleasure and hopefulness. He has done his best, the characters are unconventional, situations unique, developments natural and the plot well sustained. He has followed the pattern of no school. It is the heart and mind of Richard Reed that sparkles on its pages. How fondly he handles his creation. What pleasure, what recompense it is to him just to tell himself that he has written this, yet another step must be taken. Seizing pen and paper, in feverish haste, he writes.

"Editor of —— Magazine.

DEAR SIR,—It were folly to deny that inclosed story is my first effort, it will indicate that on its face. I have done my best and it is for you to say whether it has a mission. Your opinion is earnestly desired as to whether the manuscript possesses merit of its own, merit to win an acceptance for itself. If my effort does not rise about mediocrity, I wish to forget that it has been made. Does it evince climbing qualities. I ask an answer in the name of American Literature. Respectfully and Sincerely.

"Richard Reed."

The letter is dashed off with vim and spirit, and in a short while letter and manuscript are carried and stealthily deposited in the post-office. Why stealthily? Will not the post-master—cold horrors send me shuddering at thought of a post-mistress—scan the address on the envelope, guess the secret of its contents and who it is that seeks thus to make a fool of himself, and will not the town learn of it before to-morrow night as it passes from mouth to mouth with sarcastic comment. Stop, perhaps the post-master will fail to recognize the hand-writing on the envelope, for did he not feign an odd chirography. What chances would there have been for a "perhaps" with the post-mistress? Man is suspicious with his dreams, cautiously shielding his ideals from the jeering, mocking blasts of the unsympathizing horde, building moats and ramparts around his castle in Spain, planning them by twilight, laying beam on beam in the glooming, gazing at the moonshine glittering on the finished work, the shadows playing hide and seek in the crevices and nooks of the walls, and still watching the structure tumble to ground in early dawn, before Phœbus has chased the mists from the valleys. The joy of creation, the sorrow of distruction are the unshared secrets of his own soul, hidden away from the sneers of the maddening crowd.

Richard Reed slowly and meditatingly returns to his office and enters. It already has an occupant, the sight of whom startles him from his reveries. The lithe form of a young girl stands in the shadows of a recess, shrinking from the light of a near window, which however reveals pallid cheeks, full rich lips, tightly held, quivering with pain, and a dark brown eye, flashing an agony. Her breath comes quick and fast. It is a

picture warm with beauty and passion and one that would have appealed to a less sensitive man than Richard Reed enter and turning faces him. For a moment neither spoke, when the girl, recovering herself, says:—

"Mr. Reed I have come to you, obeying an impulse, a something that tells me, you can and will help me."

"I will do anything in my power, Miss Sayre," he responded.

It was Naomi Sayre who stands before him, a native of the town who is little known by the rest of the inhabitants and with whom Richard Reed had had no acquaintance, knowing her only by sight. She is thought to be unapproachable as she never makes advances of any kind, cultivates no acquaintances, forms no friendships, avoids those with whom she had once been intimate and passes most of her time secluded in her own home. The only occasions upon which she is seen are when quietly and hurriedly she passes up and down the streets of the town upon her errands. Those she greets are the recipients of a bright smile, and nod, tinged with a sadness, which is more felt than realized. To some of her neighbors, she is an enigma, while to others she excites a pity, but to both she seems indifferent. This is the Naomi Sayre as she is known.

After the above response, Richard Reed adds:—

"But be seated, Miss Sayre."

The girl, with a sigh, sinks down in the only rocking chair in the room, which Richard Reed pushes towards her, saying:—

"Thank you, sir."

In a moment she looks at him and says:—

"My father, Mr. Reed, something has happened to him, save him, give him your help, give him back to me."

"Why what has happened," he exclaimed.

"I do not know," she replied, "I only know some trouble has befallen him, for the officers came and took him away from us, from home, a few minutes ago. I came at once here. Find my father, where they have taken him. I know he never knowingly injured any one. It is all so dreadful, what shall I do."

To which Richard Reed responded.

"I will see to this at once and rest assured that all I can do for you shall be done."

Here was help, proffered upon the asking, and the pent up feelings broke out in one great sob. But for an instant, and Naomi arising, says:—

"Thank you. Excuse me. Stop you shall be paid for this. I shall see to that myself. Here take this, I wish it were ten times more," and laying down an eagle on his desk, she hastens out of his office, before he could interrupt her.

An hour later Richard Reed knows all there was to learn concerning the arrest of Marshall Sayre, the father of his fair client, a tale now passing from lips to lips with a greed of scandal, such as is only known by man among the higher animals.

The cashier of the town bank, while on his way to his home late the night before, reached the end of the closely, built portion of the street and was within sight of his residence hid in the shrubbery of a lawn on the next square, when he was suddenly attacked, knocked down, and robbed of his pocket-book, which contained a small sum of money After lying insensible for some length of time he regained consciousness and managed to reach his own door. He now lay prostrated from the shock and the murderous blow dealt him on his head. Later the same night Marshall Sayre entered a saloon greatly intoxicated and while there exhibited a large wallet, which was seen to contain money. When the deed of the night became noised abroad, the latter fact came to light. The officers at once proceeded to Marshal Sayre's home to arrest him, and found him asleep in bed, and the wallet of the cashier in the pocket of the coat Marshall Sayre had worn the night before, now carelessly hung on the back of a chair. They awoke him and carried him off and he now stupidly sat in a cell of the jail, wondering what had brought him to this place. Richard Reed visits Marshall Sayre, as soon as he learned the story that was circulating, and tell him his daughter had employed him to look after and take charge of his case, to which the prisoner dumbly acquiesces. After an extended examination and reexamination of the man, Richard Reed finally takes his departure, not one wit wiser than when he entered his cell. Marshall Sayre could give him no information, could not recall one single occurrence of the previous night except that he had been heavily drinking and drank several times with a fellow he called Langdon, some relative of his deceased wife's.

Richard Reed is greatly puzzled over the

story of the prisoner. Is he telling him the truth? The man's statement are frankly and candidly made there is no token that he is concealing anything, and not one word had he uttered that would connect him with the deed. How came the purse to be upon his person, was a more vexing question. Could he have done the deed while under the influence of liquor and not have retained some recollection of the event was still another worrying inquiry. The more he ponders over the facts and the prisoner's statement the more perplexed and mysterious the situation appears.

Marshall Sayre is the last living representation of the once proved and wealthy Sayre family. The Sayre's at one time had been the most prominent citizens of the town, when death in the brief period of a year felled its members, leaving Marshall Sayre and his young wife the sole heirs of the family home and fortune. Marshall had been fast and wild as a boy and young man, sowing his wild oats as he named it, money spoiled. The misfortunes of the family sobered him for a time and a little later the advent of the baby girl, Naomi, but the curse of the flesh pots was upon him and he slipped back to old haunts, old companions, old ways. Ten years of fast living, idlying, gambling, drinking and carousing, and the fortune had dwindled out of sight. Then his once beautiful wife, now old with the awful weight of heavy sorrow died with a broken heart. There was another halt in the mad career of Marshall Sayre and as he sought to comfort his thirteen year old daughter, upon the loss of her mother, he found that already the girl had become a woman, aged by the unwept tears she saw glistering in her mother's eyes and the unuttered sobs that quivered in her voice. The daughter took up the struggle where her mother had left off, but drink again set going the wheels of devilry. Everything of value had long since taken wings, the old house groaned underneath the heavy burden of a mortgage and accumulating interest and the wrecker sits stupid, sullen, senseless in a cell, the end of a life time debauch. On the poor wretch of a mortal has been lavished the love of his daughter, a love the gift of that once beautiful mother and tinged with the sadness of her sorrow. Naomi attended her father's every humor, lead him when he could not see to walk, watched him sleep off a drunken revel, anticipated his wants, prepared those nourishing meals to sooth back soberness, in fact daily sacrificed herself to the care of her drunken father. She had given up all friends and acquaintances without a murmur too proud to let other eyes gaze upon the sights she patiently endured and lived alone for his sake. A sombre smile or kind words, sent a thrill of happiness through her. This man was her father, she loved him, that was enough, this was the real Naomi Sayre.

The case against Marshall Sayre can not come up for trial before the next court in September, so there is time to await developments and see if anything new would come to light. Richard Reed battles with the great weight of damaging evidence to find at some point a solution to the tormenting questions. Ah, this is the practice of the law from another stand point, touched with the deep and rich hues of life and the beautiful face that lit up his office is not like that of the other client. The heavy legal volumes have an unnatural appearance with that face peering at him from their pages, from among the citations and authorities, yet the bewitching sadness of that face spure him on to great efforts.

Stay, tell me of thy dream, oh, dreamer. In a fort-night the visions of his hauntings again ebb and flow. He finds at the post-office an envelope with the name of "—— Magazine" across its face. His heart leaps in his throat. A wild rush of hope is replaced by a sickening sinking, as he lifts the letter heavy with his manuscript. It is returned, hastily he thrusts it in his pocket for fear prying eyes may guess the secret of his soul, is it not enough that the post-master should have by this time fathomed it. At his office he cautiously opens the letter and dreading reads the printed note of the blue pencil oracle.

"We desire to thank you for your kindness in submitting enclosed MS. to us and regret that it is not available. Return of MS. does not imply lack of merit.

Respectfully, The Editors."

A message from the Sphinx. It may have a thousand and one meanings to him who sends it, poor trash, mediocre, not suited for our journal, too long, too short, subject matter unpopular, good but we have a safe full, etc. *ad idfinituns*. To the receiver it says, a bad story hardly, a good story

probably, conclusion, a hopelessness. A riddle of the desert mystery.

Away faint heart, on speeds the dream child to another oracle to recive it back with responses modeled after that of the first. As the long summer days drawl away, Richard Reed conceives another dream child and sends it on the mission of the first and alternately the mails bear first this one and then that one to this and that magazine and they are returned as often as sent. Disappointment becomes discourage and the garment of despair. Pace by pace with despair, a change comes over the spirit of his dreams.

These long summer days have given other employments. Richard Reed has collected and sifted all the evidence in the case of Marshall Sayre, yet the stubborn front of circumstances against his client fails to yeild at a point. He has not advanced in the preparation of the case but gone around in a circle. The cashier after a fortnight rallied from the effects of the shock, when a relapse comes, brain fever sets in, and days grow into weeks and weeks into months and life and death struggle for the mastery. Meanwhile Marshall Sayre is held in custody both for lack of bail and to await the result of the cashiers illness.

What of Naomi these long weary days? Richard Reed finds it necessary at first to visit her and explain as best he can the situation. Subsequently he called to avail himself of the help of her suggestions. These visits stir his soul by the manifestations of the love of Naomi for her father and her defenceless situation, and a half unconscious resolution forms itself to throw around this woman what protection he can. As his visits became more and more frequent this half formed resolution is lost in a greater feeling, that of love for this beautiful young woman, for the soul that breaths in those dark orbs and his heart and hands go out in such attentions and solicitations as only a lover is capable of. The castles in Spain have been attacked by a subtle foe. Dreams of stories peopled with immortal characters have clashed with dreams of a fair face and a lithe form. Ideal sketches, conversations, situations and plots have given away to an ideal of womanhood crowned by love. Visions of authorship have gone to pieces amidst law and love.

At length life stakes its last straw and death's beam swings up, and the cashier slowly recovers. The September court is at hand, and as the cashier, the important witness is able to be present, the court says the trial of Marshall Sayre must proceed. The very day the trial starts, the two manuscripts of Richard Reed return, a hasty glance at the same stereotyped riddle and with a sigh he throws them into the furthermost recesses of a drawer of his desk.

The case opens and drags along drearily for the accused and his counsel. The testimony of the cashier is given quietly and firmly, he had not been able to identify his assailant but the purse found on Marshall Sayre is his and nothing missing but a dollar bill, which the saloon-keeper produced upon his examination as the one he had exchanged for Marshall Sayre the night of the robbery. Richard Reed's first cross examination instead of breaking adds to the weight of the testimony, and in despair he is about to give up when a thought flashes through him, a thought which makes his cheeks flush hot with an inspiration they give him, and as the cashier rises to leave the witness chair, he says to him:—

"Remain where you are, I have other questions to ask."

The witness sinks back and Richard Reed pauses to collect his forces and an air of expectancy breaths itself through the room and audience.

At last Richard Reed quietly asks:—

"Where did you carry this pocket-book?"

"In an inner pocket of my coat," the witness replies.

"Was there anything else in the pocket-book besides the money."

The witness looks dumb-founded and putting his hands to his head struggles with a confusion that apparently has possession of his mind. At length he raises his head and clearly answers:—

"There were other papers."

"Were those papers in the book when returned to you?" comes the lightning question.

"They were not," is the reply.

"Have you ever seen the papers sinc that night?"

"No," is the distinct ringing response.

"What were those papers," is the next question.

The witness again pauses and the court-room in breathless anxiety awaits his answer. It comes.

"I recall now for the first time the fact

that Miss Matilda Langdon, of this place, sent me a note in the afternoon while I was in the bank, asking me to call on her that evening that she wished the will I had written for her many years before and kept in the bank vault should be destroyed and a new one drawn up. That she had had trouble with a nephew named in the will and desired now to bequeath everything she was possessed of to another relative and that I should prepare such a will and bring it up that evening for her to sign. I had prepared a will according to instructions and had it and the old will in my pocket-book when robbed and have never seen these papers since."

As he stops, Richard Reed is ready with another question.

"Who was the beneficiary under the old will?"

"One William Langdon," the witness replies.

"And who under the new?"

"Miss Naomi Sayre," is the answer that startles the audience and no one more than Richard Reed.

The court adjourns at this juncture to permit certain investigations in this new direction, and the evidence of the following days develop many interesting facts. Miss Matilda Langdon had been in very feeble health and died the day after the cashier had been robbed. A nephew, William Langdon had been visiting her at the time and she had had a stormy interview with him the day before she died, after which she wrote the letter the cashier had received. The day of her funeral an old will had mysteriously been found in her house, which had been probated, giving her property to her nephew, William Langdon and cutting off her sisters child Naomi Sayre, on account of a rupture between herself and sister because of some comment of the former concerning the conduct of the latter's drunken husband, Marshall Sayre, which will the cashier identified as the one he had written and had in his pocket the night of the robbery. William Langdon had been seen in the company of Mashall Sayre that same night and while the latter drank freely at the former's expense, William Langdon had converted all the available estate of his aunt into the cash and taken his departure many weeks ago, leaving the conversion of the bulk of the estate to an attorney. The defense developed their theory in its strongest light. The evidence is followed by a short address by Richard Reed to the jury, in which though the flow of oratory of the grandfather, and the array of legal learning of the father are wanting, they are more than made up by the uniqueness of the startling presentation of the facts and the joining of the parts in one whole by a subility of logic. The jury afterwards completed his triumph with a verdict of "not guilty."

Not many months afterwards, this same court renders other verdicts and judgments, in which Naomi Sayre is interested. The probate of the will of Miss Matilda Langdon is revoked and nullified, and the letter written to the cashier is admitted to probate as the true will of Miss Matilda Langdon, which made Naomi Sayre, the legatee of the remainder of the fortune that had not been carried off by William Langdon, who is never afterwards heard of.

Meanwhile the one question of the lives of Naomi Sayre and Richard Reed remains unasked and unanswered, though eyes and heart have pledged troth long ago. Soon after all legal proceedings had ended, Richard Reed calls one evening upon Naomi Sayre, comes to her with a tender glow in his eyes, a flush upon his cheeks, a happiness in his heart, a question upon his lips.

In the midst of their rejoicings over the felicitous end of all their troubles, Naomi turns to him saying:—

"Mr. Reed, how can I ever repay you for the happiness and fortune your successes have brought me. Name your fee and I will double it."

"I fear that which I will name will greatly startle you," he answers.

Naomi arising, interrupts him and impulsively cried:—

"In the words of old, even if it be half of my kingdom, I will give it thee."

As he arises and comes toward her, their eyes meet, and hers fall before the question she now knows he will ask, one which reaches her in a softly accented whisper. "Even Thyself?"

A look, a murmured "yes," and Richard Reed holds in his arms, love captive.

Richard Reed, now in the prime of life, is a lawyer of extensive practice. He vindicated the name of the old law firm in the trial of Marshall Sayre, and patrons of his father and grandfather flocked to do homage to the success that succeeds.

The curtain falls. You and I cry "bravo,"

"lelat." Here is an ideal life realized. A man born for the niche he occupies, a niche curved out for the man. A round man snugly fitting the round hole he is in. Meanwhile that one yonder still carries the hod up the weary rounds of the ladder, this one's fingers have grown hard and stiff, laying brick upon brick, morticing his dreams between, and the architect's temple recedes in the mist. They live happily all the rest of their days in this stage play, even though as this renouned tragedian grandly dies in his heroic parts, his thoughts lovingly linger upon scenes in the theatre across the way, the successes of some buffoon, and that great comedian forgets himself amidst the shouts of laughter that greet him, as he dwells upon the tragic roles he was born to play, and you and I go home and dream over our untasted feasts, unscaled heights, the other life we do not live.

So to Richard Reed, life weaves in with the background threads of a legal existence many beautiful brilliant hued skeins, and the ground work is lost sight of as he views the centre piece, an idolized wife, crowned mistress of a home, sweet home. Yet see these delicate shades course here and there through the background, keeping pace to pace with its unfolding, lost now but to reappear, tell me what are they? Fancies he smiles at, laughs at to himself, yet clings to, loves, memories of those haunting tantalizing, dreamed of, spectre castles built upon those yellowing manuscripts still hid in the recesses of his desk drawer. While we live, the souls of our ideals cling to us.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

THE FIGHTING MOLE.

"WHAT is the fiercest animal in the world?" asked a Washington Star writer of a zoologist.

"The mole," he replied. "You are surprised, but such, in my opinion is a fact. People ordinarily look upon the mole as a sluggish and harmless creature, spending its life in groping blindly underground. As usual, the popular idea is a mistaken one. The mole is in reality, the most ferocious and most active of animals. Imagine it, magnified to the size of a tiger and you would have a more terrible beast than the world has yet seen. Though with defective powers of vision, and therefore incapable of following its prey by sight, it would be agile beyond conception, swing this way and that as it went along, leaping with lightning quickness upon any creature which it met, rending it to pieces in a moment, devouring the yet warm and bleeding flesh, and instantly seeking, with hunger insatiable for a fresh victim.

"This creature would, without hesitation, devour a serpent twenty feet in length, and so tremendous would be its voracity that it would eat twenty or thirty such snakes in the course of a day. With one grasp of its teeth and a single clutch of its claws it could disembowel an ox, and, if it should happen to enter a fold of sheep or an inclosure of cattle, it would kill them all for the mere lust of slaughter. Let two such animals meet and how terrific would be the battle! Fear is a feeling which the mole seems never to entertain. In conflict with an adversary of its own kind its efforts are exclusively directed to injuring its opponent without regard for its own protection. An examination of the skeleton of a mole will repay your trouble, so wonderful is its adaptation of structure to its manner of life. It looks like a veritable machine for digging, and it has several accessory bones which are not found in any other living beast, being discovered only in certain fossil forms.

"The mole is gifted with incredible activity. It pursues the earth worms on which it chiefly feeds with an energy that is untiring, and when it has caught one, it devours its prey like a starving tiger, rending it with its powerful claws and teeth. Occasionally it will capture a bird and tear it to fragments, devouring eagerly the bleeding flesh. During the latter part of June Mr. Mole falls in love, and in his attachments he is as curious as in all other phases of his nature. At this period he cannot meet

another male of his kind without fighting, very often to the death. He constructs a bridal chamber for his chosen spouse at the intersection of two of his tunnels, so that there is more than one way of escape for herself and the young in case danger threatens. This chamber is partly filled with dried grass for a couch, and it is always some distance from Mr. Mole's dwelling proper.

"The subterranean dwelling of Mr. Mole is a wonderful labyrinth. No human being could very well find his way about in it, supposing that the dimensions were sufficiently magnified to admit his passage through the maze of tunnels. The latter compose a network as complicated as that of sewers of a metropolis. It must not be imagined that the animal burrows at random. On the contrary, it works on a well defined system, though how it forms its burrows in such admirable straight lines, always laboring in the blackest darkness, is a mystery. The home of the beast is in a hillock under the shelter of some tree or bank, so as to be inconspicuous. Here is its centre of operations, from which regular roads lead off in different directions to its feeding grounds. If you dig into the hillock you discover a very elaborate and wonderful structure.

"The central apartment of the dwelling is a nearly spherical chamber, around which un two circular passages, one on a level with the ceiling, and the other at some height above. The upper circle is much smaller than the lower one. Five short and nearly vertical passages connect these galleries with each other. When Mr. Mole enters his house from one of the tunnels he has first to get into the lower gallery, thence to ascend into the upper gallery, and so descend into the chamber. However, there is another entrance to the chamber from below by a passage which dips downward from the middle of the spherical room, then curving upward and finally opening into one of the bigger tunnels or highroads. Of these highroads there or seven or eight.

"Owing to the peculiar habits of the mole, comparatively little is known about the animal and its ways. The use of this labyrinth, and complicated system of tunnels, the latter usually extending over, or rather under, a very great space of ground, is in some degree a mystery. One object of the arrangement is doubtless that the owner in case of harm shall be able to make his escape. By the continual pressure of the creatures fur, the walls of the chamber and passages are rendered smooth, hard and polished, so that the roof will not fall in even after the most severe storm. The mole can swim excellently, and it often sinks well for the purpose of obtaining water to drink. In fact, it possesses most varied accomplishments, and I consider that in point of ferocity, activity, and voracity it is superior even to the great cats of the tropics."

A NEW YEAR IS COMING.

By Genesee Richardson.

A NEW YEAR is coming
With fair young faces,
Tho' what she will brings us
We can not trace.

A New Year inexorable
Unto our will,
With gladness or sorrow
Our hearts to fill,

With new joys and pleasures,
With bitter fears,
With rough storms and sunshine,
As vanished years.

With burdens of care and
Gifts truly blest,
With peace and sweet comfort,
With toil and rest.

With glad eager meetings
And sad farewells,
With songs and laughter that
All ill dispells.

Painful anxieties,
Despairing tears,
And hopes rudely blighted
As vanished years.

OCONOMOWOC, WIS.

MONTEITH BROTHERS.

By Capt. W. H. Macy.

WHEN I was in the old bark Danube, bound to Cronstadt, we had a young fellow among our crew named Joe Archibald, who had hailed from somewhere in New York State. Joe was a steady, willing chap enough, but slow in his movements, and sometimes rather dull of comprehension.

One night in the British Channel, we were aloft, reefing the main-topsail, and I don't know how it happened, but Joe was out on the weather-yardarm, at the earing. He didn't get there very often in reefing, but there he was, in this particular case, and he made very slow work of hauling his earing out. We all got impatient, and raised quite a clamor about it, until at last the second mate, who was in the bunt or slings of the yard directing the work, thought it was time to look up the matter. He passed out across our backs, and seizing the lift, jumped up on the yard, striding the neck of Hans the Swede, who was at the "dog-ear," helping Archibald. The second mate, who was an old English salt, at once began to bully Joe, and some high words passed between them. The Yankee blood of Joe Archibald rose up at this language, and he in person, rose up too, and clinched with his tyrannical superior. A fierce struggle ensued, the details of which could not be seen by us in the darkness, but Hans had to "lay in," and crowd the rest of us up towards the mast, to give the combatants room. After a minute of fearful suspense, during which no word was spoken, the two men were seen falling, locked together, down into the dark void below! "Man overboard!" roared old Hans, and other voices took up the chorus as we hurried down on deck, not stopping to secure the slatting canvas. The mate had seen indistinctly what was going on, and saw the men fall into the sea, for the ship was on the weather-roll at the moment, and they both went clear of the side. The life-buoy was cut away from the stern, the hencoop thrown overboard, and an attempt made to lower away a boat. But nothing was ready, and the small boats on the quarter, from neglect, was hardly in a condition to float, even in smooth water. We could not back under short sail, so we put the helm up and wore round, which used up some time, and brought us well to leeward of the spot where the men went down. Finally, it was decided to be useless, considering all the circumstances, to put our boat into the water, and after manœuvering a little in the neighborhood of the place, we gave the men up, and proceeded on our course.

We got the topsail reefed, but it was a sad time with us and we made bungling work. We were very shorthanded after the loss of our two shipmates, and the mate was forced to go aloft himself with the rest. After all was snug for the night the tragedy was talked over, and both ends of the ship compared notes about it. The mate said that there were two splashes in the water some feet apart, though both at the same instant of time. He saw nothing of either of the men afterwards, but the captain, who had rushed out of his berth at the sound of the alarm, and cut away the buoy, thought he saw one of them rise on a sea astern. But he was not sure of this, and it might have been only his imagination. The phlegmatic Hans, who was the nearest witness to the death-struggle of the two men, could tell little more than what the rest of us already knew, and he was so overwhelmed with astonishment when he saw Joe Archibald, without speaking a word, straighten himself up and grapple with the stout Englishman, that he could hardly be said to have his wits about him. So, as in all such cases, the matter was a nine days' wonder, and then ceased to be the topic of conversation. In due time we arrived at our port, where other men were shipped to fill the vacancies, and the sad circumstances were seldom alluded to on the return voyage.

It was more than a year after this that I was in Liverpool, belonging then to the packet ship Fidelia, of New York. We were nearly ready to sail on our return, when among the passengers who came on board to cross the ocean with us to America, were two ladies, evidently mother and daughter, as the family resemblance was strong between them. While I was busy aloft, a neatly-dressed young man came off

in another boat, and I observed that he was very attentive to the younger lady, and their farewells seemed to be of a prolonged and tender character. I thought the figure and attitude of this man had something strangely familiar to me, and as I came down from my work, I had a fair view of his face as he was going over the gangway into his boat. Spite of his spruce longshore togs, it could be no other than my lost shipmate, Joe Archibald.

"Joe!" said I, extending my hand. "How are you, old fellow?"

The young man regarded me with a polite stare, but did not meet my hand with his own. It was Joe Archibald, and no one else, but he evidently did not mean to recognize me.

"You have the advantage of me, sir," he said.

"Well, perhaps you have forgotten the voyage in the old Danube, but I don't believe you have, or the way you went overboard, locking yards with that bully of a second mate. Look 'ee here, Joe; you needn't be afraid of the consequences from that affair, and slight an old shipmate who is really glad to meet you, and would like to know by what strange miracle you were saved, and wouldn't bring you into any trouble for"——

"You are evidently mistaken in the person, sir," he interrupted. "You will excuse me, sir, if you please, as I fear I have already overstayed my time. Good-day, sir." And with a last glance of admiration at the young lady passenger, who seemed an amused spectator of this scene, he went down the side into his wherry, and was pulled away towards the pier. An order summoned me away to duty just then, but I determined to make the acquaintance of the ladies on the passage, and find out all I could about their friend. I was quite indignant that Joe should thus cut an old crony, and could not believe it could result from pride or any feeling growing out of bettered circumstances. Such conduct did not seem at all like my shipmate as I had known and remembered him, and I decided that my first theory must be correct; he was afraid of trouble on account of the scrape in which he had sacrificed the officer's life, and so nearly lost his own. For this reason he had changed his name, and did not care to be known.

We proceeded on our voyage to New York, and it was several days before I got a good opportunity to speak to the ladies, though I found out that they bore the names of Mrs. and Miss Joy, and also that they were Americans returning to their native country, after having resided for some time in Liverpool. They were still in half-mourning, the husband and father having died a few months before.

One fine evening I was at the wheel, and the officer of the deck out of hearing, when Mrs. Joy came on deck and stood near me, looking out upon the ocean. Now was my time to get some light upon the mystery of Joe Archibald.

"Excuse me, madam," said I, putting on the best airs I knew how, "but I would like to make an inquiry of you."

"Indeed," said she, with a little surprise, but pleasantly enough. "What may it be, sir?"

"There was a young man on board the day we left Liverpool," said I, "who appeared to be acquainted with you, or perhaps I should say with the younger lady, your companion."

"My daughter, I presume you mean," she interrupted with a smile.

"Yes—or at least I supposed her to be such. May I ask you the name of the young gentleman? I assure you this is not idle talk on my part, but, for certain reasons, I have a special interest in the question and its answer."

"Why, sir, that is Mr. Monteith, confidential clerk of Butler Brothers. He is—as perhaps you may have guessed from what you observed—quite attentive to Susie, and has been so indeed for some time."

"Monteith, did you say his name was?" I asked.

"Yes, sir, Thomas Monteith. Why, did you ever know him? He has the reputation of being a most worthy young man."

"No doubt of that," said I. "Yes, madam, I knew him, and I am sure I know no ill of him, except it be that he cuts an old shipmate, but he may have had good reasons for that, or at least, what he thought good reasons."

"I cannot believe from what I know of Thomas Monteith that he would act thus without good reasons," returned Mrs. Joy, briding up.

"Probably not, as Thomas Monteith; but when I was shipmate with him his name was Joe Archibald."

"Mystery!" said the lady. "How lon ago was this?"

"Something more than a year now. May I ask madam, how long you have known him?"

"Well, I must admit that it is rather less than one year, and I have heard him speak of having followed the sea before we knew him. But tell me, if you please, what you know about this gentleman, or about Mr. Archibald—for I cannot believe they are one and the same person."

"He sailed with me in the bark Danube," I answered, cautiously. "But I don't think I care to talk about how we parted company. He left us suddenly in the middle of the voyage, under remarkable circumstances, which I think may be connected with this secrecy and change of name."

"I see you are not to be drawn out on this subject," she said, with a slight tone of vexation. "But I may ask one question, whether the circumstances to which you allude were such as to be any stain upon his character? I am anxious on this point."

"No, madam," said I. "At least I don't think they were."

"And still they were such as might cause a man to change his name and cut his old acquaintances?"

"Yes. That is, he might feel it necessary to do so for his personal safety, though his own conscience might be clear enough."

At this moment the approach of the officer of the watch cut short the conversation, and the lady passed below to her cabin, with her curiosity now thorougly aroused, and completely on the rack.

The next day, when I was again at the helm, the daughter sought an interview with me, but I was satisfied I could gain nothing from the ladies in the way of information, they having only known Monteith for a few months, as a clerk in a certain store, and being quite in the dark as to his antecedents. I could not do otherwise than be civil and polite to Susie Joy, with her youth, beauty, and modesty, but I also tried to be reticent. Her persuasive powers drew little more from me than I had already said to her mother, which Susie of course already knew in detail. She had seen, rather than heard, what passed between me and her admirer at the gangway the day she came on board, and her interest and curiosity were even greater than those of her mother, I had no word to say against Mr. Monteith, and finally admitted that it was possible I might be mistaken in the matter of identity. I drew from her that her Thomas also called himself an American, that he had spoken incidentally of having been a seaman, and that he was expected to follow them across the water the succeeding summer. She did not say for what purpose he was coming, but there was a significance in her tone and manner which I was shrewd enough to understand.

Thus matters stood when we arrived at New York and landed our passengers. I did not lose track of the Joys, but learned that their home was in the city, though well "up town." I made three successive voyages in the Fidelia to Liverpool and back to New York, and still kept the run of the family, living in the same spot. I looked up the place of business of Butler Brothers, in Liverpool, and once through a window I saw the young clerk. The more I looked at him the more I was satisfied he was no other than my lost shipmate, but as he did not choose to acknowledge himself as such, why should I intrude myself upon him?

Summer came, and the time when Monteith was to have his vacation arrived. Susie Joy had told me that he would probably take passage over in our ship, and I looked carefully into the face of every new arrival on board, intending if I again met my mysterious ex-shipmate, to try him again as Joe Archibald. But the Fidelia was ready for sea, and the last boat had left us for the shore; Mr. Monteith had not come, and how the faithful girl would be disappointed.

It occured to me, however, that ours was by no means the only packet ship of the summer. The Garrick had sailed a few days before, and it was possible that he might have secured an earlier passage, to surprise his lady-love. The Manhattan was "up" for New York to follow us the next week, and he might have waited for that ship. Our trip was a short one, and I lost no time, as soon as I could be spared from duty, in calling at the home of the Joys.

I found the young lady in a melancholy mood, and she burst into tears at sight of me, as if my appearance had served to call up unpleasant thoughts. She tried to be reticent as to the cause of her emotion, but I drew from her the confession that Thomas Monteith had proved false and unworthy of her constancy. She had met him on Broad-

way walking in company with another lady, had looked him full in the face without receiving any answering glance of recognition. She had even demeaned herself so far as to address him by his christian name, but was rewarded with a careless stare, and then an intimation, rather impatiently thrown out, that there must be some mistake. Mortified, and, as she thought insulted, the poor girl had returned home to nurse her sorrows, or to combat them with her pride, as best she could. She was sure of the identity of Thomas Monteith—who should know him if she did not? As I could testify that he was not a passenger in our ship, it was plain that he must have come over in the Garrick.

I went to the office of the line to which that ship belonged, and thoroughly examined the passenger list. But no such name as either Monteith or Archibald was to be found. I made particular inquiries of some of the Garrick's crew with whom I was acquainted, but she had brought over no young man, either in cabin or steerage, at all answering the description. The whole matter was more deeply involved than ever in mystery.

Becoming now quite excited on the subject, and having spare time on my hands, I instituted a systematic search for Archibald, or Monteith, whoever he might be. I visited all the boarding-houses for seamen that I had any knowledge of, for if Joe were still following the sea, in some one of these he would probably be found. I was coming out of one where I had examined all the names on the list without being any the wiser, when I saw my man approaching. I rushed into the street to meet him, the landlord crying out after me.

"Is that the man you want? Why, that's Jack Smith!"

"Joe," said I, with outstretched hand. "How are you, old crony?"

"Ben Warren!" he exclaimed, in a tone of glad surprise. "But hush! don't call me Archibald. I'm Jack Smith here. I've had half a dozen names since that unlucky tumble from the Danube's main-topsail-yard, and to tell the truth, I was sailing under a purser's name even then."

"So I suppose," I answered. "If your name isn't Archibald it may be Monteith."

Joe looked at me in some surprise, and led the way into his own lodging-room, closing the door.

"I don't know how you guessed this, but Monteith is my real name, and I've no cause to be ashamed of it. I followed the example of many other fools, and went to sea under false colors, and now, on account of the tragedy where I so nearly lost my own life, I fight shy of the name of Archibald, and never answer to it."

"I don't think you need to have any fear on that score. I suppose you were picked up by one of those chances that may be called miracles. And was the English second mate saved too? Tell us your story—but hold on, first answer one question—have you a twin brother?"

"Now, I'm all out of breath with your questions. Well, yes, I was picked up, and by a miracle, too, in the literal sense of the word, for it was the brig Miracle, of Baltimore, that fell in with me, at daylight the next morning, astride of the Danube's life-buoy, and nearly ready to drop off from exhaustion. No, the second mate was not saved, too—at least not to my knowledge. And yes, I have a twin brother—or had one a few years ago. He went to sea before I did, and the last I heard of him was in Liverpool. He had worked into some employment there ashore. Why did you ask?"

"Because I have seen your brother, Thomas Monteith, and he will probably be here in a day or two, in the Manhattan, if indeed he has not already arrived. And the mystery that has haunted me these last six months is all clear to me. But come, I want you to go with me to see a certain young lady up town."

"Oh," said Joe, or Richard Monteith, as he should now be called, "I don't know how to visit young ladies. It isn't in my line of business."

"That's what she thought when she met you the other day on Broadway and called you 'Thomas.' And yet you had a lady in tow at that time."

"Ah! that's the lady, is it?" he asked. "Now I remember; but I was taken by surprise, and perhaps was rather abrupt in telling her she was mistaken in the person. Well, I had a young woman in tow at the time—or perhaps I should say she had me in tow. She was an old acquaintance, daughter of one of my former landladies. But if you and the other lady are both acquainted with my brother Tom, I suppose I must go with you, and we can talk as we go."

Our conference was a highly interesting one, and was cut short by our arrival at

Mrs. Joy's door. Being shown in, we found Susie Joy and Thomas Monteith seated side by side on the sofa, but both wearing a slight expression of constraint, as if there were some matter between them not quite satisfactorily explained.

I saluted the young lady, gave a cool nod to the gentleman, and then introduced his double as a friend and former shipmate of mine, Mr. Smith.

But the name only bewildered Thomas for a moment, sufficient to add more effect to the amusing tableaux, for the brothers were not long in recognizing each other. But Miss Joy's bewilderment was certainly greater than that of any one else, unless it might be her mother, who had followed us into the room. The two ladies looked from one to the other of the twins, and back again, then at each other, comparing notes, and talking mostly in interjections. I offered to wager Susie that if I took them both out of the room, and made some little alteration in their dress to bring them both alike, she could not identify her own lover. She looked again and again at them both, and declined to take the risk. Indeed, the resemblance between the brothers was so perfect, that how their own parents could have distinguished them seemed a mystery to us all.

They had been orphaned a few years before, and had separated each to seek his own fortune. Leading the wandering lives of seamen, they had lost all traces of each other, until they were thus somewhat strangely brought together.

A happy wedding party was that held at the home of the Joys a few evenings later. Dick Monteith went with the newly-married couple in the Fidelia on her next voyage to Liverpool, where he also entered the employ of Butler Brothers. My wanderings took me in a different direction after that voyage, and I have never seen either of them since. But I have heard that those doing business with the present firm of Monteith Brothers have great difficulty in distinguishing the members of it one from the other; and that many ludicrous mistakes arise in consequence, making the career of the twins a complete Comedy of Errors.

THAT OLD WRITING-DESK.

IT was just like the old miser to have that desk; it was also like me to buy it. I have always had a craze for buying things that nobody else would, with, as a matter of course, a fit of regret immediately after. Not unfrequently, so strong and sudden has been my repentance, have I left my deposit-money forfeited in the hands of the auctioneer, and declined to call for the article. However, in this case of the writing-desk I completed the purchase, mainly because I wanted something of the kind for occasional use, and not because I thought the article of any great intrinsic value; and not, above all, for any love or liking I had for its former owner.

Love or liking! It was very little of that any of his neighbors had for him, or any one else that knew him. How could they? Consider. He had been for years in receipt of a handsome income from his lands, and no one had ever been the better for it by a penny piece. He had farmed out his estate, demesne and, all, until it was tilled up to the very hall door mansion—handed down to him from generations of high-spirited and generous ancestors—to fall into ruin and decay, until, with it stripped roof and broken windows, it became the eyesore and a nuisance in the neighborhood. His whole life was spent in cheese-paring and saving and hoarding, without one redeeming feature to break the vile monotony of his existence; unless the fact of his having brought his nephew and niece to live with him, when they had no place else to go to, and no one else to support them, could be called a redeeming feature.

But it was not, it was anything but that. Helen Morgan was of herself quite enough to turn his old ruin of a mansion into a fairy palace of brightness—to make it happy and pleasant on the darkest day that ever gloomed from a winter's sky. The daughter of his youngest brother, she had been brought up to great expectations, with this result, that when her father died in London, it was found that every farthing he owned in the

world, and a great deal that he did not own, had been lost in his Spanish silver-mining speculations, and that his daughter was left absolutely penniless. But she was handsome and agreeable, cultured and accomplished; and, if it were only by the rare beauty of her presence, amply repaid her uncle for the home he gave her.

She herself did not think so, however, for, in her simple, innocent way, Helen Morgan believed there never was any one so good or generous as he. Except one other—George Morgan, her cousin. George and Henry were sons of another brother, who had been killed crossing a five-barred gate in the hunting-field, and needless to say he left no money behind him either. The saving qualities of the family seemed to be concentrated in Sam; and on the principle, I suppose, that one can never have too much of a good thing, he possessed them in perfection. The brothers came to live with him, and perhaps two youths more dissimilar in character, manners, and habits never dwelt under the same roof. The former was free, clever, good-looking, and open handed—when he had anything to be open-handed with; the latter was surly, wooden-headed, and quite as close-fisted, when occasion arose, as old Sam himself.

It was not to be supposed that two young people of the qualities and character of Helen and George Morgan could live long in the same household and in intimate relationship without falling in love. At least it was not to be supposed by anybody save old Sam Morgan, and it never occurred to him. I doubt indeed if he much more than knew there was such a word. Wherefore it was that when George had come into his twenty-fourth year, and his uncle finding it necessary to do something for him or to extend the family wealth, having proposed a match between himself and a neighboring heiress, the young fellow resolutely refused. To be sure the young lady was not very prepossessing, and was, I am afraid, a little ill-tempered; but that should not have availed much in presence of old Sam's eagerness for the match, and his readiness, contrary to his general character, to give him a liberal settlement. But George, to his uncle's intense annoyance, declined the proposed union; stated his reasons too, moreover, which were, if possible more afflicting and unforgivable than his refusal. Said reasons, or reason—for they finally came down to one—being, that he was in love with his Cousin Helen, and that she and no one else in this wide world, should be his wife; or if not she, certainly no one else.

What a to-do there was in the old mansion then, to be sure! George was denounced, disinherited, disowned, expelled! And Helen would have been expelled too; but where could a girl go or what could she do? For the matter of that, there was not much for George to do either; the training he had received was not calculated much to fit him for the world. But what course there was open to him he promptly, with characteristic resolution, adopted—he enlisted.

You may depend upon it there was an affecting scene at the parting between the two, and that the old beech tree, overhanging the gateway at the end of the avenue, heard some passionate vows and promises. You might be also pretty accurate in believing that if the tears dimmed Helen's diamond eyes, the crimson tints of the moss-rose were not very far from her cheeks.

But the parting moment came and went, and with it, too, went George, to join his regiment, now under orders for the distant Indian land, leaving Helen to sorrow in silence and loneliness for her absent lover. Whenever a letter or communication came from him, if ever one did, be sure it was treasured up in secret, and few eyes but her own looked upon it.

Things went on gloomily enough in the old dismal mansion—now a thousand times more dismal than ever—for the next three or four years; old Sam Morgan amassing wealth more and more every day, just as if he were to live for ever to enjoy it; and Helen and her remaining cousin passing the time as best they might. The latter, indeed, now that George was gone, became quite a favorite with his miser uncle. It was no wonder, for there were much akin in spirit, disposition, and ways of thinking.

There is nothing, the cynics tell us, so changeable as a woman's mind; but herein these libellers err. There is one thing more—the mind of a miserly old bachelor. Wherefore it is not surprising that after the lapse of some time, and when his health began to fail, old Sam Morgan became as anxious for a union between his surly nephew and his handsome niece as he had formerly been incensed at the bare idea of one between her and George. Perhaps it was because he grew to like the idea of his

money remaining in the family; perhaps because it was only the development and outcome of one of his many humors and whims. But so it was, however, that he proposed the matter, with a by no means indefinitely expressed intention of leaving all his great wealth to them. Alas! to his astonishment and indignation, Helen, with the greatest possible distinctness and promptness—with a distinctness that put it beyond all possibility of doubt or preadventure whatever—declined. Not all his wealth could tempt her into it.

If old Sam were incensed and outraged on the previous occasion, his anger on the present was beyond all power of description. Nor was there any possible source of assuagement of him now, as there was on the occasion when George was exiled, for he could not in any kind of decency expel Helen from under his roof. Where was she to go? Not to India, I suppose.

Talking of India, however—from that country at this juncture began to come news which, by swift and frequent steps, served to attract and finally rivet men's attention on it—to the exclusion of all other things whatever. A revolt, a mutiny, a rebellion, a massacre, had grown up there by breathless stages; and in a land of one hundred and twenty millions of people, a few thousand English soldiers were, on the turn of the clock almost, called upon to uphold English rule and government.

The first news of the outbreak came upon disbelieving and incredulous ears in England; but, following swiftly, came information that made men's hearts stir and throb as they never had throbbed or stirred before. The news of the massacre of Cawnpore sent a thrill of pain and indignation through the great heart of England. And, thereafter, the thoughts of every man, woman, and child in the land were fixed on the distant Indian empire, and on the handful of beleaguered men upholding her dominion there. Beleaguered! Worse than beleaguered. In the open plain, the swords and spears of troops that British officers had drilled and trained were massed in their thousands in mutiny and rebellion; artillery and guns that British gold had paid for, parked before and beside them. And in almost every barrack and compound of British India, treachery lurked in the black man's heart, and the demon of murder stood unseen at the white man's elbow! In all that swarming population, with disaffection rampant in the land, there were but a few British regiments—and England twelve thousand miles of stormy seas away!

From time to time news came of George Morgan; stray paragraphs in the newspapers, notices in despatches, and such-like, told us of what he was doing. First and most fearless where all were daring; readiest to confront the foe and the last to retreat; for eight-and-forty hours at a time in the saddle; compelled to sleep, whenever he got the chance, beside his unsaddled horse, the reins twisted around his arm, so that when the bugle rang out he could leap at once into the saddle; suffering hunger and thirst in a land where thirst meant, if not death, agony. We all knew well that, whenever he was, there was a true heart, and that no more gallant horseman was gathered under the shadow of the British flag in that distant land.

It was an effort of heroic resolve that made the Feringhee officers determine to attack and storm, with their small forces, the mighty city of Delhi, swarming with troops, and every soul in it disaffected to British rule, or in sympathy with the revolted sepoys. Nothing but the primest courage must have made the generals resolve on the attempt; and nothing but the keenest knowledge and unhesitating reliance on the valor of their men could justify it. Nor were they wrong. As an instance: The regiment of Guides, in which George Morgan was, crossed from Meerdan to Delhi, by forced marches, a distance of five hundred and eighty miles, in twenty-two broiling days, and the evening of their arrival before the walls, after a short repose, were aroused to repel an overwhelming attack by sepoy horsemen! And thereafter it was constant fighting until the time came to storm the rebel hold.

But at length Delhi did fall! The power of the Indian hosts had gone down once again before the dauntless valor of the Feringhee; and once again the days of Clive and Hastings, and Napier and Gough, had come on the land—Delhi had fallen! But, riding sword in hand over the cannon and sabring the sepoy gunners that still worked them under the very walls of Delhi's great mosque, George Morgan found his soldiering days numbered too. A pathan sword had descended on his helmet, had glanced off it and come on his left shoulder, severing all

the muscles of his arm. The blow stunned him; he reeled from his horse and fell; and thereafter, the wild uproar and clash of arms in every street of the conquered capital came but vaguely, or not at all, on his ears.

Needless to say how proud we were all when his name came home in the despatches, when the newspaper gave different versions of the affair, but all, however differing, agreeing in eulogy of him; and how more than delighted we were when we found that his wound was not mortal. But his soldiering days were over; he received the Victoria Cross, was retired, and came home.

What his old miserly uncle thought of him and his prowess, no one knew; he read all about it, but said nothing. He was ill, very ill, when his nephew came home. For days he continued in pretty much the same way, only by degrees growing worse, until he became so bad that all knew the end could not be far off; and then for the first time he had George called to his bedside. "George, I have left you the"—— But whatever more he was going to say remained unsaid, for he lay back in a fit of coughing; and when the coughing was over, so was his life—his last breath had gone out with it.

Well, we all thought George had been left amply provided for, and, indeed, every one was glad of it, for two reasons—first, because he needed it, and secondly, because he deserved it.

The day came when the will was to be opened; and behold! not one word was there about George—not one word. The old man had left every stick and stone and every guinea to the churl his brother. The miser had been as untrue in his death as he had been mean and avaricious during his life; and George was penniless. We could scarcely believe our ears, when the lawyer's managing clerk—the old lawyer himself had died a few days before Sam Morgan—read it out; and thought he must have made some mistake. But no; there it was all in black and white, in the clearest and most unmistakable handwriting, but all the more aggravating perhaps for that.

The new owner was not long in making changes. A new broom sweeps clean, and he was a new broom indeed. First, George was ordered off the premises. Where could he go? He came to me, as the only friend he had. The next thing the churlish heir did was to propose anew to Helen, never doubting now that, with the unquestioned inheritance of his uncle's wealth, she would gladly accept him. Therein, however, he made a mistake. She rejected the unamiable suitor in favor of his disinherited brother; his wealth could not sway or altar her affections—not in the slightest. Naturally, she had to go too; a solitary bequest of three hundred pounds was all that came to her share through the will.

Presently, Henry Morgan began to turn the half-ruined mansion quite out of doors. Preparatory to putting it in new and complete repair, he called and auction off the effects and furniture; and what a rickety collection this latter was! And among other things was that old writing-desk of which I spoke at the beginning of my story.

I don't known what prompted me to buy it, for it was old, worm-eaten, and crazy. But I bought it, and placed it upright in a corner of the parlor, to be used whenever I had occasion for writing, which was not very often.

So that on the evening when we gave the party in honor of the wedding—did I tell you that George and Helen got married? No! Well, they did. And a handsomer or blighter couple you could not see in a month of Sundays. She could not look otherwise than handsome; and George, his paralyzed arm notwithstanding, looked just the type of what a bridegroom should be, his well set-up form was so fine, and his eye so calm and bright.

As I have said, we gave a party on the afternoon of the wedding-day to the young couple. We were not likely to see them again for many a weary year, if ever; for they had made up their minds to make their home in the far west of Canada—in that district since well known as Manitoba; and so we determined that this last evening in the neighborhood should be a pleasant one. Let me remember whom we had there. The rector and his wife and two daughters; the doctor and his two sons, the latter, full of life and fun, just home from the university; and quite a number of other people, mostly young. Among others present was the managing clerk, who, as before related, had read out the contents of old Sam's will. There was plenty of jollity and rejoicing, but there were not many tears shed for the memory of old Sam Morgan.

Well, in clearing the parlor for the dance, my wife insisted that the old desk should be left standing in the corner where it was, on

its four crazy legs. I don't know why she did so, but I rather think it was in delicate mockery of the old fellow's memory, and as showing, in the only way she could, her contempt for the unhandsome way he had acted by her young friends. It was quite a foolish proceeding on her part; but you cannot reason with women, at least I never could—and the folly of it was shown unmistakably when, in one of the waltzes, Walter Hempwood, the doctor's son, and Lilian Hume, the rector's daughter, going a little too rapidly—heaven bless their bright hearts! careered full tilt against it; and, lo and behold you! the rickety legs were knocked clean from under the dazed thing; and it fell on its side on the floor, tumbling away from its moth-eaten supports.

"Confound the rickety thing!" said the lawyer; "it wouldn't belong to old Sam if it were not up to some mischief."

A kick! And behold! so worm-eaten and mouldered and aged was it, that it fell to pieces under the vigorous spurning, as if it were made of dust—which, indeed, from the quantity of that article that flew about, it seemed uncommonly likely it was. And behold again! out from the debris there rolled a neatly-folded parcel of paper, quite fresh and shining in its glossiness, and tied with a red tape. Where it came from no one could say, or where it could have lain concealed, unless in some secret drawer which had remained unsuspected and entirely hidden from view. But there, at anyrate, it was.

"This seems to me like something in my way," said the managing clerk, after a pause in which we all looked at it; while he took it up in his hands, gazed at it wonderingly for a second, and then opened it. He looked down its first page, turned over that, read down the second, while a curious expression grew into his face and eyes; and finally, throwing all over at once, turned to see the last, with the big red seal staring at him from the bottom thereof. For a moment he stood in suspense; and then with a thundering hurrah, that might have wakened old Sam in his blessed repose, waved it over his head, and running up to George Morgan and Helen, who shrank back a little, believing him to have gone suddenly demented, cried: "Give me your hands! Give me your hands, I say! By the honors of war! this is grander news than the capture of Delhi! You're the owner of Castleholm."

"What is it? What's the matter? What does it all mean?" everybody asked at once.

"What does it all mean?" echoed the clerk. "Why, it's the will—the will. The last will and testament of Samuel Morgan, Esq., now on his death-bed, but sound of mind and body, continued he, quoting in his exuberance the usual phraseology of such documents, which he knew off by heart; "and it's properly signed and witnessed: and—he leaves all his property, every rafter and kitchen stone, every guinea and shilling and copper penny, to his beloved nephew, George Morgan!"

And so it was—beyond all doubt and question. You may depend upon it there was a startled group in my humble parlor for a moment or two, as we all held our breaths, and the next moment a hearty cheer burst forth.

What an evening it was, to be sure! What an insane sense of mind rejoicing possessed us all! How we patched up the broken desk again, to try to find out the exact spot where the precious document had lain concealed. How we regretted that the dear old gentleman lying in his grave could not be with us to partake of our delight! How we wondered at our own blindness in failing to see the many virtures that shone through his character during his long and exemplary life! How many a rare and ennobling trait, which we stupidly did not see before now stood revealed to us!

Well, there was no time lost in putting matters into legal shape, and the next day George Morgan and the lawyer posted away to Dublin, and at the very earliest moment had the document lodged in the Probate Court. A few days more settled all. There was no further need to talk of Manitoba or emigration; the hero of Delhi was heir to the property, and in a short time entered into possession

It is hardly worth while delaying to tell of the rejoicings that took place in the country round when the news became known; or how well and worthily the wearer of the Victoria Cross and his handsome wife filled the position of lord and lady of the estate; or of what a magnificent house-warming was given when the mansion, being renewed and refurnished, was reoccupied by them; nor of many other pleasant things which I should like to speak of if I had space and time. Only this: George, at Helen's request, appointed his brother agent of his estates.

MY SISTER ANNABEL.

By Mrs. Maste Preston.

CHAPTER I.

I DON'T know if all boys loved their sisters as I loved Annabel; but very sure I am that few have such a sister. She was my twin sister, and all my life I had never been separated from her.

I had been a cripple from my birth, and so weak and delicate that the fatigue of moving about on crutches, was often more than I could bear, day after day I lay on a couch, worn out by pain and suffering, and Annabel tended and cared for me. I wearied sometimes of books and other things provided me with which to while away the painful tedious hours, but never of her—never of the tender kisses she pressed upon my burning forehead—never of the melodies she sang—never of the stories she told. Very beautiful and bonnie was she. I liked to watch her as she talked—liked to listen to the gentle voice, to see the shifting lights and shadows upon the lovely face, the glorious eyes grow luminous with earnest feeling.

It was a quiet place in which we lived. There were the rector and the curate, the doctor and the lawyer, and the usual sprinkling of tradespeople, of ladies of uncertain age and small certain incomes, of bachelors and spinisters, of widows and widowers, which usually make up the population of a small country town.

About a mile outside the town, standing far back from the road in its own grounds, was Leigh place—our home. Just opposite was Heron Vale, the residence of Mrs. Heron, a widow lady. About two miles distant, was Melbourne Court the seat of Lord Kindare. There is no place in all England more beautiful, it is a house fit for royalty. Yet his lordship never visited it.

We came of a grand old race we Westerners—a race whose men had never shrunk from a daring deed, if the cause was good and noble, whose women had been famed for their beauty and grace, and honored for their goodness and truth. Rich too, and given to hospitality, we had been esteemed; but that was long ago. It would only be wearisome were I to tell how it came to pass that every succeeding generation of the Westerners grew poorer and poorer, until but very little remained to us—mother, Annabel, and myself—save the name and Leigh Place.

We were proud of Leigh Place, it had been handed down from father to son for centuries. A quaint old possession it was, with grey turrets pointing skyward; long wide corridors with painted windows, through which the sunlight glinted and glimmered, and cast warm rich shadows; spacious lofty rooms with massive, old-fashioned furniture, a pleasant terraced garden, where peacocks strutted with gaudy outspread plumage, and bright-hued fragrant flowers blossomed, and birds sang the day through, with never-tiring throats, sweet songs of gladness.

I have but a faint recollection of my father—of anything concerning him save his death. That I remember perfectly. I remember his starting out one bright summer morning, when balmy southern breezes played amidst his golden hair, and brought a soft glow to his cheek, also the gay loving words with which he left us, being held before him on his horse as he rode down the avenue of grand old oaks and sycamores. I remember, more distinctly than all, the agonized cry that rang through the house, just as the shadows of evening were gathering, as my mother rushed into the hall and flung herself down beside a still form which had been tenderly borne in. I remember that the blue eyes slowly unclosed, that the pale lips murmed faintly, "Poor Mabel!" and then the lids closed again—forever. In the full flush and promise of life's golden summer, with the future spreading fair and smiling before him, full of high hopes and aspirations, my father had been killed by a fall from his horse.

I have been told that from that day my mother became a changed woman—that the gracious manner, the winning smiles, all died away—that the face grew grave and stern, the voice cold and proud, that, rejecting all sympathy and withdrawing from all society, she devoted herself exclusively to her children—from all society save that

of Mrs. Heron of Heron Vale. Mr. Heron had been an officer in the army, had served for many years in India, and died there from the effects of a sunstroke. Mrs. Heron had but one child, a son, Hubert, a few years older than Annabel and I. Some similarity in their circumstances, it might have been, drew the two women together; certain it is that the friendship subsisting between Mrs. Heron and my mother was deep and lasting.

Seeing the love we bore each other, my mother did not send Annabel away, as she might otherwise have done, but provided her with a governess at home. As for myself the curate came and instructed me in what it was considered essential that I should learn. I, the poor cripple, was not likely to require any vast amount of book-lore. So the years passed on, happy ones they were, years in which care and sorrow were to us but empty words, till Annabel and I were seventeen, then the governess was sent away, and the curate's visits—in his capacity of teacher—to Leigh Place ceased.

I think if ever I regretted my helplessness, it was then. With time at my disposal, free to do as I would, how I longed to ramble with Annabel over the hills and through the valleys, amongst pleasant-gemmed meadows and deep dense woods! But she gave me no time for repining. Every fine morning she would have me lifted into a low basket-carriage drawn by a rough Shetland pony, and would drive me miles and miles, sometimes along dusty hilly high roads, in search of a fine view, at other times down green shady lanes, beside babbling murmuring waters. All the afternoon long she read or conversed with me, in the gloaming she sang. I dread to think what my life would have been at that time without Annabel.

Hubert Heron had left home then. Much to the dismay of his mother, he had chosen to adopt his father's profession. The mother thought, sorrowfully enough, of the privations and dangers of a soldier's life; but seeing that her son's heart was set upon it, she did not attempt to dissuade him from it. Very little Heron Vale saw of him.

He was a noble-looking fellow, tall and erect, with sunny hair and bright blue eyes, brave and fearless as a soldier should be with a certain tender chivalry in his bearing towards women which it was pleasant to see. Looking upon him, people instinctively trusted him.

About this time the war broke out, and Hubert's regiment was among the first ordered away. I will not dwell upon the grief which the news caused at Heron Vale. Every mother who has parted from an only child, uncertain if ever again beholding him, can imagine it.

The day came when Hubert Heron bade us "farewell" with a voice which he strove in vain to render steady, and eyes the dimness of which did no disgrace to his manhood, went away with his mother's kiss still warm upon his cheek, his mother's blessing ringing in his ears.

But something beside his mothers blessing accompanied him—a curl of glossy golden-brown hair. Before he went he sought my mother, told her that he loved Annabel, and begged her to give him hope to take with him, that if he lived to return, she should be his wife. Annabel was called in, the sweet blushing face told its own story. Hubert's character was everything that could be desired. He was sufficiently rich. There was no just reason why my mother should withold her consent; so Hubert Heron went away with the hope which was as dear as life to him.

Annabel's face may have been a trifle less bright and her smile not quite so ready for a time, but she bore Hubert's departure well. She was only seventeen, and hope is very strong in a woman's heart at that age.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN autumn came round with its brown golden glory, we had received but three letters from Hubert Heron—only three—but they had been read and read again as never were letters before. We started out one fine sunny morning, Annabel and I for a drive.

"Let it be a long one," I cried. "There will be few more days like this."

It was, indeed a lovely day, the remembrance of it returns to me vividly even now. In fancy I see the broad road, with great old trees on either side, hedges in which the late dog-roses and woodbine yet lingered, the little carriage with its shaggy pony and blithe bonny driver. A fair picture was the latter for a brother's eye to rest upon, in her simple print dress with its dainty frillings, her jaunty blue sailor

jacket, her broad-brimmed hat crowning her golden-brown hair with coquettish grace. I like to recall it, to think of the lovely face as it looked then before sorrow had clouded its brightness, to remember how like two careless happy children we were.

"I think the brightness of the morning has infected our spirits," said Annabel. "Wynter will you hold the reins? I must have some of those lovely roses."

I laughed a pleased laugh as she sprang from the carriage and climbed the steep bank for the flowers.

"I should like to make a picture of you, Annabel. I would call it "Queen of the Morning," I cried.

"You saucy Wynter! Oh, isn't that too bad!"

A capricious envious breeze had swept up the road, lifting the roses far beyond her reach. I sat enjoying her efforts to regain them, admiring the rich color which the exercise brought to her cheeks, the pretty pout which rested on her lips.

"Isn't it a shame!" she cried. "But I will not be defeated."

As she spoke she sprang, and made a clutch at the coveted spray. A cry of alarm burst from my lips as I saw her attempt to regain her footing and then fall heavily down the bank. She lay for a moment without speaking; from her face and lips every trace of color had fled, but for her wide-open eyes I should have thought she had fainted. In my terror I knew not what to do for I was unable to alight from the carriage unassisted.

"Wynter," she said, speaking sharply, and in evident pain, "I have sprained my ankle. I cannot get to the carriage without assistance, and you cannot help me. Are you brave enough to drive on until you meet with somebody who will come to me."

I did not like the idea, but we were far away from home and something must be done.

"And leave you here by the roadside, and in pain? Will that be well?"

"I can think of no other plan, Wynter. You will surely meet with some one soon."

Looking about me with anxious eager eyes, I espied a gentleman in a field some little distance off. Little mattered it to me who he was, so that help could be obtained. In a few minutes I was within speaking distance. I waited for no ceremonious greeting, the thought of Annabel in pain and alone made me utterly forgetful of politeness.

"Please come to my sister," I shouted. "She has fallen down a bank and hurt her foot."

The gentleman came leisurely toward the hedge that bounded the field, a fine tall man he was, with dark hair and eyes, and proud grave face; his age was apparently about forty. There was amusement as well as surprise in the look with which he regarded me.

"Why did you not help her yourself?" he demanded, coolly.

"I am a cripple," I cried, indignantly; "I cannot move without help, or I should not have left her alone on the roadside."

"I beg you will pardon me," he returned, voice and manner alike undergoing a marked change, "I was not aware of that. I will be with you directly."

He walked rapidly towards the gate, and in a few minutes was seated beside me, driving to Annabel. Very wan and white looked her face when we came up to her, but the rich color mounted to her brow as she met the dark eyes of the gentleman fixed admiringly upon her.

"I fear we must appear very rude," she said, "But I have fallen down the bank and sprained my ankle, and am unable to move without help. My brother is lame, and cannot come to me, if you would kindly assist me to the carriage, I could manage nicely."

I could not but admire the gentle delicate way in which he assisted her, she was soon seated comfortably beside me, the injured foot resting on a cushion. I experienced a thrill of pride as I saw how admiringly his eyes rested upon the sweet bonnie beauty of her face, how evidently he was charmed with the gracious, highbred manner with which she thanked him.

"I should like to know the name of the lady whom I have had the happiness of serving," he said.

"We are Wynter and Annabel Westerne," she replied, "of Leigh Place."

"I had formerly the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Westerne," he said, "I esteem myself fortunate in meeting with her children. I am Robert, Lord Kindair. I shall be anxious to hear of the progress of your foot, will you grant me permission to call upon you?"

It was readily given, and with a low bow,

a courteous "Good-day," and a lingering glance at Annabel, he left us.

"Wynter," said Annabel, giving me a little comical look of dismay, "what must his lordship think of us?"

"Who would have taken that to be his lordship?" I retorted. "I did not even know that he was in England."

My mother's alarm was great upon hearing of our adventure, and strict injunctions were laid upon us never again to drive out unattended. Annabel's ankle was much hurt, and threatened to confine her to the house for some days. I had feared my mother's displeasure when she should learn of the permission given Lord Kindair to visit Leigh Place, and was agreeably surprised to hear her say:—

"I remember him well; I used to admire him greatly. I shall be pleased to be enabled Annabel."

The next day he came. If we had been pleased with him on the previous day, the pleasure was increased upon closer acquaintance. He readily accepted my mother's invitation to remain a guest at Leigh Place for the day, and we could not but be charmed with the courtly grace, the easy quiet manner with which he adapted himself to our simple ways.

I soon discovered I had never met with a man more agreeable or more thoroughly accomplished. He read to us, and the words gathered new meaning from his rendering; he told us of foreign lands, and dwelt on their beauties until I long to see them for myself; he sang well, and played with a master hand. I was delighted I thought it the pleasantest day I had ever spent.

"Annabel," I cried, when he had gone, "but for your pain I should esteem our yesterday's adventure most fortunate. I have never seen a man I admire as much as I do Lord Kindiar.

After that day Lord Kindair came frequently to Leigh Place, and I could plainly see how agreeable to my mother were his visits. His lordship's departure from Melbourne Court was postponed again and again. Winter's snow lay thick and deep upon the ground, and frost had decked the bare trees and leafless hedges with its fairy fretwork when at last he went away.

Meanwhile nothing more had been heard of Hubert Heron. Care and anxiety were making Mrs. Heron's handsome face look pale and worn—the sadness of its expression was pitiful to see; and Annabel's eyes wore a look of wistfulness in their depths altogether new to them. Papers were eagerly searched for news concerning Hubert, but searched in vain. Annabel had always been held in high favor at Heron Vale, and in these days Mrs. Heron clung to her more than ever—the brave hopeful heart, which would not give way to despair, comforted and upheld her.

I often wondered then if Lord Kindair had any idea of the understanding existing between Annabel and Hubert; I have known since that he had not—that he supposed the interest we felt in him was what we should have shown for any old and intimate friend whose mother we loved as we did Mrs. Heron.

Lord Kindair had gone away and Christmas had come when we heard tidings of Hubert Heron.

We had been spending the day with Mrs. Heron—my mother, Annabel, and I—and had gathered round the fire cosily in the dusk of the winter evening, when some letters were brought in.

One quick glance, and Mrs. Heron perceived that one bore a foreign postmark, and that the handwriting was that of a stranger. I pray heaven I may never again hear a scream such as burst from her lips as she hastily scanned the contents; the remembrance lingers with me even to this day; it was the cry of the widow bereft of her sole remaining tie to earth—her only son—for the letter told that Hubert was dead. He had died gloriously, bravely, as a soldier should die, cut down upon a far-off battlefield while leading on his men valiantly in a desperate encounter.

I think that hour the mother's heart died within her; certain it is that she rapidly sank, and when the primroses and cowslips were decking the meadows, and spring was come, we laid her to rest.

And Annabel? Never a complaint uttered she; resolutely putting aside her own sorrow, she tended and ministered to Mrs. Heron. Though my sister's face was pale and her eyes sad and heavy, she murmured not. It was her hand which smoothed the dying woman's pillow, her voice which whispered in the falling ear sweet words of hope and promise.

We were quiet then, with the hushed quietness that falls upon a house when it

inmates have shared together some trying calamity.

I have said before that my mother cherished a warm attachment for Mrs. Heron, and I am sure she deeply mourned her death; but it always seemed to me that she entirely failed to understand how much Hurbert's loss affected Annabel—failed to perceive how grave now were the tones which were once so joyous, how shadowed the face which was once so bright and sparkling.

The months wore on. Summer had passed, with its flowers; out in the orchards and fields men gathered the ripe luscious fruit and garnered in the golden grain; and then came Lord Kindair.

More constant than before became his visits, more gladly than ever did we welcome them. He expressed polite regrets when informed of the death of Mrs. Heron and Hubert; he had known but very little of them, and consequently could not be expected to evince any great feeling at this communication.

CHAPTER III.

WE were sitting alone, Annabel and I, in the fast deepening gloom of an autumn twilight, with no other light than that of the fire. My mother had been called from the room more than an hour before, and we decided that the lamps should not be lighted until her return. We were beginning to wonder what kept her so long, when she came in; by the light of the fire I perceived the expression of pleased excitement which her features wore.

"I have had a visitor," she said, coming up to us, and sittting down beside Annabel. "It was Lord Kindair," she added, in reply to our questioning glances. "His visit was expressly to me, and the object of it has pleased and gratified me more than I can say."

It was most unusual for his lordship to pay short unceremonious visits to Leigh Place, and to take his departure without seeing us. I am sure my face must have reflected the surprise I saw plainly depicted on Annable's.

"Lord Kindair sought me this afternoon," said my mother, softly, "to tell me of his love for you, and of his great desire to make you his wife. Annabel, I promised his lordship that I would ascertain for him if he may hope to win you. When he comes to-morrow for his answer, what shall I tell him? Shall I say 'yes?'"

By the dim light I could see that Annabel's face was of a deathly whiteness and pallor.

"Mamma," she said, "I cannot; you forget Hubert."

Her voice was hoarse and unsteady. I had never heard that name from her lips since that sad winter day.

"Not at all, Annabel. Esteeming him as I did, that would be impossible; but that has nothing whatever to do with the question."

"Pardon me, mamma, it has everything to do with it. Had Hubert lived, I should have been his wife; I loved him more than words can tell. I like and respect Lord Kindair, and am sensible of the honor he does me; but no other can ever take Hubert's place in my heart. Do not ask me to marry him, mamma."

"But, Annabel," cried my mother, "surely you will not refuse Lord Kindair's offer? Think; position, wealth, every luxury, the love of a good man are offered you—for the sake of a memory you will never cast all this aside."

"I cannot forget Hubert, mamma," she said, tremulously. "I had made no complaint, I have tried not to leave undone any duty that I was wont to perform; but none the less deep was my love, none the less bitter is my sorrow."

"Annabel," rejoined my mother, impressively laying her hand upon her shoulder, "you and Wynter are all I have to love on God's wide earth. Since that bright summer day, years ago, which brought me such heavy grief, I have lived but for my children. You know that I, your mother would not seek to counsel you save for your good; believe me when I tell you that this pain and sorrow will all die out—that they are but the dreamy fancies of a young girl—that the time will come when you will smile to remember what you once deemed the ruling passion of your life—that the esteem and friendship you entertain for Lord Kindair are a good basis for wedded happiness."

"Do not urge me, please, mamma."

I had kept silence until now, but I could not withstand the cry which burst with a convulsive sob from Annabel.

"Mother," I said, "what is Lord Kin-

dair's wealth and position to us if Annabel cannot love him? They are less than nothing."

"Wynter," she exclaimed, passionately, "you know nothing of what you are talking about. Such an offer as this of Lord Kindair's does not fall to a portionless girl twice in her life."

She rose and paced up and down the room. The firelight fell upon her. A handsome stately woman she was still—one to command admiration. My glance followed her as she walked backwards and forwards in quick agitated fashion, and took in the moved expression of her face, the restless excitement pervading her manner. I was at a loss to understand it. A proud woman I had always known her to be proud—proud of her name, proud of Leigh Place—but this eager intense desire to influence Annabel to marry for the sake of wealth exhibited to me a new phase in her character.

"Annabel," she exclaimed, abruptly, stopping before her, "I am a proud woman. I have never asked a favor in my life, but I ask this of you. Let the answer I give Lord Kindair be favorable."

There was no reply from Annabel, no reply save that of sobs.

"Listen to me," continued my mother. "Let me tell you why I plead. Leigh Place is mortgaged—was mortgaged at your father's death, to pay outstanding debts—and now the money is called in. I have six months in which to pay it. It is impossible for me to meet the demand; I have found it extremely difficult to provide the interest. Lord Kindair, knowing this, has offered, in the kindest, most delicate manner to assist me if I will use my influence with you on his behalf."

Still no reply from Annabel. The fitful gleams of firelight played on tightly clenched hands, on a white scared face, but there was no reply.

"Annabel," resumed my mother, "it is for Wynter's sake I urge it. How can I bear to take my poor sickly boy from his home? He would pine and die away from"——

"Not for me, Annabel," I interrupted, vehemently—"not for my sake!"

She came to me then. She knelt beside me and pressed hot kisses on my brow and cheek.

"There is nothing I would not do for you," she cried, passionately. "The world holds nothing for me half so dear as you, my poor brother!" She arose then and walked to my mother. "I did not know that Leigh Place was mortgaged," she said. "Give me till morning to think. You shall have my answer then." Without waiting for my mother's words of thanks, she went to her own room.

No words can tell how wretched I was that whole evening—how through the long weary hours of the night I tossed, restless and miserable, upon my bed—how bitterly I murmured and rebelled that I was not as other men, able to fight my way, to make a name in the world, but must remain ever a useless clod, a heavy burden to those I loved. I shrank from quitting Leigh Place; yet I hated the thought of Annabel's marrying Lord Kindair against her wish. Morning found me feverish and exhausted; I was unable to leave my room. My mother came to me, but the daylight faded and I had seen nothing of Annabel. Then I longed to be down-stairs, for I heard Lord Kindair's voice in the hall. The minutes lagged tediously; the day was cold and cheerless; through the branches of the trees outside the wind went moaning with a dreary mournful sound, the rain pattered dismally against my window. By and by I heard Annabel's step.

"Have you missed me to-day, Wynter?" she said, as she came towards me.

I took the outstretched hands and drew down the dear face for a kiss.

"Sorely, Annabel," I replied.

"Poor fellow!" she said, tenderly. "But, dear, I have been very busy—very much engaged with my own thoughts—looking my future steadily in the face—thinking how thankful I should be that it is in my power to benefit mamma and you—you who have done so much for me. You see, dear," the clear young voice went on, "when mamma first spoke, her words took me by surprise, and I replied as I should not have done."

Oh, faithful loving heart! Oh, brave unselfish words, which no endeavor could render steady!

"Lord Kindair is below, Annabel."

"Yes, dear; he has been there some time. What a noble, thoughtful man he is Wynter! I cannot understand how he came to love me."

"He may well be proud of loving you, Annabel," I said, looking into the beautiful face admiringly.

"You dear partial Wynter! When I said

to him that I did not love him so much as he would perhaps desire, and that my ignorance and inexperience must at some time pain and disappoint him, he told me with such a kind pleasant smile how more than willing he was to risk his happiness. I am telling you this, dear, knowing that you would like to hear it. And, Wynter," she continued with a little eager flutter in her voice, "he says that when I am his wife he will take me abroad, and that you shall accompany us. Think of the pleasure of it. We shall see the place we have so loved to talk and dream about—see them together." She was kneeling before me then, looking into my face with eager searching gaze. "Better than all, Wynter," she went on, speaking her words slowly, and narrowly watching their effect, "he has spoken of the skill of some German doctor—of the hope he entertains that you may be partially cured of your infirmity. Fancy, dear, standing in one of those quaint old towns by the swift-flowing Rhine, and gradually acquiring the power of walking at will!"

Heaven forgive me if it was wrong! I could not repress an eager outcry of joy. All my life long I had so prayed for health and strength—so envied the poorest, most ignorant laborer, who, rich in the use of his limbs, was free to go whither his fancy led.

The listening ears caught the cry—the watchful eyes read the gladness of my face.

"Won't it be delightful, Wynter?"

"Not unless you are happy, Annabel," I cried. "I am not so utterly selfish."

"I cannot fail to be happy, Wynter."

She was quiet then, and I did not attempt to break the silence. She sat on a low cushion at my feet, her hands resting on her knees, and watching her, I thought that, of all the ladies of the house of Kindair, she would be the loveliest.

"You are quiet, Wynter," she said, suddenly rousing herself.

"I am thinking, Annabel—thinking of the old days when we were children. I was calling to mind, too, the stories you recited to me in those days, Annabel—beautiful stories they were; many a time they soothed me as nothing else could have done."

Her hand sought mine now with a gentle caressing gesture.

"Thinking of them—of the love that dictated them—suggested to me one I should like to tell you. I am a poor story-teller, you know, Annabel; but may I try?"

"Please, Wynter."

"Well, 'once upon a time'—I must commence properly, you know—there lived a twin brother and sister—like you and me, dear—who loved each other very dearly. The girl was fair of face and brave of spirit, the boy, sickly, and crippled, and weak-hearted. All his life long had he depended upon his sister—upon her loving care, her gentle guidance. Many a time would he have utterly fainted on his life's journey but for her comforting hopeful words. There was no act of kindness too great for her to perform—no sorrow of his which she did not rejoice. It sometimes seemed to him as though the whole aim of her life was his happiness, and in no way could he repay her. A heavy sorrow befell her, but she bore it bravely and well. Her mother saw no duty neglected, her brother missed not one of those loving attentions which were so sweet to him; sorrow appeared to perfect and beautify a character which had been before almost faultless; and, watching and admiring, the brother forgot to pity. No words could do her justice, no words could express how much he loved her. Morning and evening his thought was of her, his prayer that at some time some act of his might give her happiness. But his hopes and prayers seemed always vain—still he remained a burden, still a"——

"Hush, hush, Wynter! You pain me—you were never that."

She was standing now, bending over me, tears raining down the sweet face.

"Still a—still a— Annabel, you have disturbed the flow of my ideas. I must conclude on some future occasion."

"Wynter," she said, "I must leave you now. Mamma will wonder what is keeping me so long."

"Spare me a few minutes more. Sing me a little song before you go."

"Not to-night, Wynter—not to-night."

But I still held her hand in a lingering clasp.

"Annabel," I whispered, "look at me and tell me, will you be happy in this marriage?"

The clear luminous light of her eyes was turned full upon me.

"Wynter," she said, "none can ever be to me what Hubert was. Let this content you, not even for your sake would I marry Lord Kindair did I not like and respect him."

CHAPTER IV.

LORD KINDAIR was no laggard in his wooing. "I am not so young, that I can afford to wait for an indefinite time," he said. "When spring comes, let me give Melbourne Court its mistress." And so it was decided, and preparations were at once commenced. I was satisfied to know that Annabel would be at least content, and, perceiving the passionate love which Lord Kindair had for her, I was fain to believe that happiness would surely follow. There was no wish of hers but was anticipated, no taste but was studied and gratified. A harder heart than Annabel's would have been grateful for such devotion. There was no need to question my mother's happiness; every wish of her heart was satisfied. Leigh Place would still be the home of the Westernes, Annabel would be Lady Kindair.

April came with its sunshine and showers. The first of May was the day appointed for the wedding. "May weddings are proverbially unlucky," Lord Kindair had said, "but ours shall prove that the old adage does not always hold true."

I think Annabel and I grew more dear than ever to each other in those days, if that was possible. Lord Kindair was not selfish in his love, he did not seek to deprive me of my sister's society. As much now as in the old days, when he had no claim upon her, was she my companion.

One morning, tempted by the soft balmy air, Annabel had me wheeled in my bath-chair out into the grounds of Leigh Place. We were alone that day, for my mother had accompanied Lord Kindair to a neighboring town in order to complete some arrangements, and was not expected back until evening. Annabel had brought a book with her, and seating herself on a garden chair, she commenced reading to me. So interested were we in the story that we did not notice the sound of steps along the gravel path until they stopped immediately in front of us. As we looked up, a scream burst from Annabel's lips. Standing before us, wan and agitated, was Hubert Heron!

In a moment she was in his arms, and he was raining passionate kisses upon her face. I was silent, not a sound could I utter; it was all so strange, so incomprehensible. Had the grave given up its dead, or in all the long months had I been dreaming when I believed that Hubert Heron had fallen upon that far-off battle-field?

Annabel was the first to recover. She freed herself from his clinging arms, and sank white and trembling upon the seat, covering her face with her hands. I do not think Hubert saw me. Down on his knees before my sister he fell, and strove to take her hand in his. Oh, it was pitiful to hear the loving words which fell from his lips—to hear them and know that she had no right to listen!

"Annabel," he cried, "my bonnie love, I have frightened you. I should have sent you word that I was coming. Annabel, why do you turn away? Have you no word of welcome?"

"Wynter," said Annabel, gaspingly—"Wynter, tell him."

"Hubert," I said, "we all thought you were dead, an officer of your regiment wrote and told your mother so. I saw the letter myself. Annabel has no right now to be listening to your words."

He turned to me then with a puzzled inquiring air.

"But, Wynter," he cried, "you know that all was wrong. I wrote explaining how the mistake occured as soon as I was able. I had been so terribly wounded that for months I lay in one of the hospitals insensible to everything. It was a poor fellow of the same regiment, and a similar name—Hubert Heron—who was killed, not I. Annabel," he said, turning again to her, "Annabel, my love, say that you welcome me."

"Hubert," I said, seeing that she was unable to answer him, "we never had your letter, we have believed you dead, and next month Annabel will marry Lord Kindair."

Never till my dying day shall I forget the agonized look which came into his eyes, the cry of anguish which burst from his lips.

"And this is woman's constancy!" he cried; and no words could describe the bitter reproach of his voice. "This is my reward after all my sufferings! I come home and find my mother dead, and the woman who had promised to be my wife faithless and untrue!"

I forget what I said, forget the words that passed between us. I only know that at length he went away. He would not wait to see my mother, would not listen to my eager words of explanation.

"Annabel might have waited," he cried, in his unreasoning pain.

All the time Annabel had sat motionless as a statue, speaking never a word, her hands covering her face.

"Annabel," I said, softly, as the sound of his footsteps died away in the distance.

The hands were withdrawn then, and I was aghast at the sight of the face they had hidden.

"Annabel," I cried in my alarm, "Annabel, speak to me!"

"I am going in," she said, her voice hoarse and constrained, "I will send some one to you."

Late in the afternoon my mother returned, and Lord Kindair accompanied her. I had not seen Annabel since the morning, and in the lonesome hours I had spent, thinking upon her sorrow—sorrow too great for words—I had decided upon the course I should adopt. In answer to their inquiries I said that Annabel had been ill, and had kept her room all day. This had the effect of despatching my mother immediately to ascertain what was the matter, and then Lord Kindair and I were alone.

I looked wistfully into the fine noble face, and thought of the many kindnesses he had shown me, of the earnest goodness which characterized him, and I shrank from the pain I was about to inflict; but for his own sake, as much as for Annabel's, he had to hear what I had to tell.

"Lord Kindair," I said, speaking abruptly, "you know what a queer fanciful fellow I am, dreamy, you know, and different from others. Well, I have been thinking all day that I should like to tell you a story I commenced telling Annabel the evening that she came to me with the tidings that she had promised to become your wife."

"A story, Wynter? Well, tell on."

He seated himself beside me, and smiled kindly down upon me.

"There was once a twin brother and sister," I began, with tone that faltered and quick-beating heart, "who loved each other very dearly. The brother was sickly and weak-hearted, and had depended upon his sister's loving care all his life long. Her brave hopeful words cheered and encouraged him, when, but for them, he would have been dejected and downcast indeed. There was no sorrow which she did not soothe by her sympathy, no joy in which, for his sake, she did not rejoice. No words could do her justice, no words could tell how much her brother loved her. Morning and evening his thoughts was of her, his prayer that at some time some act of his might give her happiness. The story I told Annabel ended there, Lord Kindair, but I have more to tell you."

He looked at me with wondering eyes.

"Proceed, Wynter," he said, gravely.

"There came a time when, to save her mother and brother from becoming exiles from the home that had been handed down from father to son for generations, she consented to become the wife of a man to whom she gave her utmost reverance and trust, but not her love. That had gone from her keeping many a month before, when a brave young soldier went out to Russia. She had heard that he died there—that he was killed upon the battle-field—and I know now that to her it must have appeared as though all that made life pleasant and desirable died with him. But she bore her sorrow bravely and well, no duty was neglected, no attention she had been wont to pay to her brother ceased."

I paused and glanced at Lord Kindair, but he did not speak.

"It was not thought needful to tell the new lover this. The wooing went on prosperously, all things were ready, even the day for the wedding was appointed, when suddenly the girls old lover appeared before her."

A low cry broke from Lord Kindair. I dreaded to look towards him.

"It was a painful meeting," I resumed, hesitatingly. "The brother, who was present, knew then that, although she might keep her promise and faithfully perform every duty, she would never be happy now that she knew the man she loved was living. Thinking over this, longing intently to help her, a golden thought came to him. Relying upon the noble generosity of the man to whom his sister was in honor bound, he would tell him all, and ask him to release his sister from her promise."

There was utter silence now. So still was the room that the rustle of the leaves in the garden sounded distinctly.

I looked up at Lord Kindair. His face was white and stern.

"I cannot pretend to misunderstand you," he said, hoarsely. "Who is the man your sister loves?"

"Hubert Heron," I replied.

"Have you reflected on the consequences to yourself, supposing I comply with your wish, and release your sister from her engagement?" he asked.

"I shall have to leave Leigh Place," I said; "but that is nothing if Annabel's happiness is secured."

"Not only Leigh Place will you have to give up," he returned, "but the hope of health and strength. Think well of it, Wynter—think how welcome it would be to move about at will without pain or assistance."

"I have thought of it," I cried; "but Lord Kindair, I can be brave as well as Annabel."

As I spoke the door opened, and Annabel, followed by my mother, entered the room. Her face was deathly white, but her manner was quite calm and composed. Straight to Lord Kindair she walked, and stood before him.

"Robert," she said, quietly, laying her hand upon his shoulder—and I saw him wince under its gentle touch as though it pained him—"I have something to tell you. I think it right that you should know."

"Spare yourself the recital, and me too, Annabel; I have already heard what you have to tell," he said.

"If you have heard it from Wynter," interposed my mother, angrily, "his zeal in the matter has far outrun his discretion."

"Annabel," said Lord Kindair, never heeding my mother's words, "why did you not tell me of your love for Hubert Heron?"

He was looking eagerly at her; a brilliant carmine dyed the face which but a minute before had been so white.

"Wynter was not mistaken then," he continued. "You do love him. It was not idle fancy, forgotten as readily as a dream. Why have you not dealt honestly with me? You have treated me unfairly."

The dark eyes were raised to his then—raised with a pleading expression.

"Do not reproach me," she said. "Indeed I will do my duty. I acted for the best."

"Duty!" he cried, passionately. "That will not satisfy me. It is like giving a stone to the starving."

She broke down then, sobbing convulsively.

"Bear with me a little," she pleaded, wearily. "Indeed I will try to make you happy—I will give you no cause for reproach."

"When men of my age love," he returned, bending over her, and speaking kindly, "they do not love lightly. My love for you has been the one passion of my life. I do not think you need to be told how deep and true it is—it is so true, so tender, Annabel, that I prefer resigning the hopes which have been so dear to me to holding you to your promise, now that I know another will always hold first place in your heart, and that marriage with me cannot bring you happiness."

He must have seen the light of hope which flashed into her eyes.

"And so," he said, sadly, "my dreams of happiness end here, and yours begin anew. Wynter," he added, turning to me, "it was for love of you, I find, that Annabel consented to become my wife; and now, for your sake, I release her from her engagement to me."

As the brave noble words fell upon my ear, I wondered if Annabel had acted wisely in casting aside the love of such a man even for Hubert Heron.

"Wynter," he said, abruptly, "do you suppose this young man is still in the neighborhood?"

I replied, and with truth, that I could form no idea; in our stormy troubled interview I had not thought to ask.

"Never mind," he said; "doubtless he will easily be found. Annabel," he said, "the wedding must take place as if this had not occured, only there will be a change of bridegrooms; and you must spare Wynter and I. In another week he and I will be on our way to Germany; it is but a little thing I ask you." His voice was becoming hoarse and unsteady. I could see that he was fearfully agitated. "Hush, hush!" he said, as she would have spoken grateful tearful thanks. "I cannot quite bear that yet."

There was another brief interval of silence, which no one attempted to break.

"Good-by, Annabel," he cried, suddenly; "good-by, my love!"

He bent over her and pressed a passionate lingering kiss upon her lips, and then hastily left the house.

Throughout all my mother had spoken but once—those few angry words to me. Doubtless she was at a loss what to say, or how to act. Sorrow for Annabel and Hubert she would surely feel, but that the engagement between her and Lord Kindair should be broken off was an event for which

she was entirely unprepared. Affection too was wounded as well as pride; for she cared for Lord Kindair second only to her own children, and grieved for his evident pain. Moreover, the thought of the gossip which would ensue when the circumstances became public must have been extremely distasteful to her.

We were a silent party for the remainder of the evening. My mother never addressed either Annabel or myself, and at last retired without bestowing her usual "good-night" kiss.

Morning brought her a long letter from Lord Kindair, and a box for Annabel. The box contained a casket. Annabel's tears fell fast as she examined the contents. All the jewelry he had selceted for her in the days when she was his betrothed wife was there. Diamonds and pearls, emeralds, rubies and sapphires, lay side by side. A short note accompanied the gift. The letter to my mother enclosed the title deeds of Leigh Place, which he begged her to accept; it also made all necessary arrangements for my accompanying him forwith to Germany.

I never saw the letter, but I know it must have been like the writer—noble. There were traces of tears on my mother's proud calm face after reading it—an unusual tenderness in her manner sprang up both to Annabel and myself.

Hubert came in the evening—he, too, had had a letter. Lord Kindair had readily ascertianed where he was, and had written to him, telling him everything—telling him that "he had resigned all claim upon Annabel, all hope of one day calling her his wife." It was a good letter—one that none but a thoroughly generous, unselfish man could have written. From that hour Lord Kindair had no more ardent admirer than Hubert Heron.

That evening I was glad with a gladness no words can express—glad when I looked upon Hubert's and Annabel's bonnie eyes, the expression of restful content on her sweet face; but in the midst of my joy my thoughts would revert to the master of Melbourne Court in his lonely rooms, mourning over the vanished dreams of happiness, his crushed hopes, none the less because he had acted unselfishly and nobly.

The next week Lord Kindair and I set out for Germany. The kind thoughtful manner was unchanged, but he was very quiet, very grave; he never spoke of Annabel, and the letters containing the report of her marriage he read without comment. A dear and valued friend he became to me, gentle and tender as a woman, almost filling Annabel's place in my heart.

Twelve years since I told my story to Lord Kindair, twelve years since he sacrificed the love of his life for Annabel. Twelve years—and what have they borne in their flight? Sorrow to some, gladness to others, changes to all. I came back from Germany cured. Delicate I shall ever be, but I can walk any easy distance. I need not tell of Annabel's delight, of my mother's proud thankfulness. "Only one wish of her heart is ungratified," she says—"she should like to see the lady who will be mistress of Leigh Place after her." Ah, well, who can say what a day may bring forth? A dainty form, with a winsome witching face, and eyes of forget-me-not hue, in fancy stands beside me even now. I hear the sound of a gentle low-toned voice, I feel the touch of a soft tinny hand, and the glad hope fills my heart that when summer roses bloom, and the perfume of lilies fills the air, and sweet clover decks the meadows—when the hum of insects, and the low of cattle, and song of birds render Leigh Place a home to be desired—my mother's wish will be gratified—I shall bring home my wife.

Lord Kindair is yet unmarried. Handsome still, an expression of sadness now rests on his face in repose which it was not wont to wear. None knew better than I how true were his words when he said "his love for Annabel was the one passion of his life," how hard it was for him to resign her to an other. The affection which sprang up between us when I told him my halting incomplete story has never lessened; a warm kind friend, a truly noble man, even Hubert cannot rival him in my esteem and love. When he is at Melbourne Court, Leigh Place and Heron Vale have no more frequent visitor, none that is more warmly welcomed and reverenced.

And Annabel and Hubert are happy—happy in each other, happy in their children. Heron Vale echoes with the patter of little feet, the music of childish voices. If no other joy were mine, the joy of witnessing Annabel's happiness would content me; for dear to me as in the days when no other love came near us is Annabel, my twin sister.

GOVERNOR MIFFLIN'S FIRST COAL FIRE.

By F. C. Bridge.

IT is truly astonishing, that the inexhaustible beds—mines of anthracite coal, lying along the Schuykill River and ridges, valleys and mountains from old Berks County to the mountains of Shamokin, were not found out and applied to domestic uses, full fifty years before they were! Coal has been exhumed from the earth, and burned in forges and grates in Europe, from time immemorial, we think, yet we distinctly remember when a few canal boats only were engaged in transporting from the few mines that were open and worked along the Schuykill—the comparatively few tons of anthracite coal consumed in Philadelphia or sent away. As far back as 1820, we believe, there was but little of any coal shipped to Philadelphia from the Schuykill mines at all.

Governor Mifflin, of Pennsylvania, lived and owned a fine estate in Mifflin County, in which county was discovered from time to time, any quantity of black rock, as the farmers commonly called the then unknown anthracite. Of course, the old governor knew something about stone coal, and had a slight inkling of its character. At hours of leisure, the governor was in the habit of experimenting upon the black rocks by subjecting them to wood fire upon his hearts; but the hard, almost flint-like anthracite of that region resisted with most obdurate pertinacity the oft-repeated attempts of the governor to set it on fire. It finally became a joke among the neighboring Pennsylvania Dutch farmers, and others of the vicinity, that Governor Mifflin was studying out a theory to set his hills on fire, and burn out the obnoxious black rock and boulders. But despite the gibes and jokes of his dogmatical friends, the old governor stuck to his experiments, and the result produced, as most generally it does through perseverance and practice, a new and useful fact, or principle.

One cold and wintry day Governor Mifflin was cosily perched up in his easy chair, before the great, roaring, blazing hickory fire, overhauling ponderous state documents, and deeply engrossed in the affairs of the people, when his eye caught the outline of a big, black, rock boulder upon the mantel-piece before him—it was a beautiful specimen of variegated anthracite, with all the hues of the rainbow beaming from its lacquered angles. The governor thought "a heap" of this specimen of the black coal, but dropping all the documents and state papers pell-mell upon the floor, he seized the piece of anthracite, and placing it carefully upon the blazing cross sticks of the fire, in the most absorbed manner watched the operation. To his great delight the black rock was soon red hot, he called for his servant man, a sable son of Africa, or some down South Congo.

"Isaac!"

"Yes, sah, I'se heah, sah."

"Isaac, run to the carriage-house, get a piece of black rock."

"Yes, sah, I'se gone."

In a twinkling the negro had obtained a huge lump of the anthracite, and handing it over to the governor it was placed in a favorable position alongside of the first lump, and the governor's eyes fairly danced polkas as he witnessed the fact of the two pieces of black rock assuming a red hot complexion.

"Isaac!" again exclaimed the governor.

"Yes, sah."

"Run out, get another lump."

"Yes, sah."

A third lump was added to the fire, the company in the governor's private parlor was augmented by the appearance of the governor's lady and other portions of the family, who, seeing Isaac lugging the rocks, came to the conclusion that the governor was going "clean crazy," over his experiments. It was in vain Mrs. Mifflin and the daughter tried to suspend the functions of the "chief magistrate," over the roaring fire.

"Go away, women, what do you know about mineralogy, igniting anthracite? go away, close the doors, I've got the rocks on fire—I'll make them laugh t'other side of their mouth at my black rock fires!"

In the midst of the excitement, as the governor was perspiring and exulting over his fiery operations, a carriage drove up, and two gentlemen alighted and desired an immediate audience with Governor Mifflin,

but so deeply engaged was the governor, that he refused the strangers an audience, and while directing Isaac to tell the strangers that they must "come to-morrow," and while piling on more black rocks, brought in by Isaac, in rushed the strangers.

"Good-day, governor, you must excuse us, but our business admits of no delay."

"Can't help it, can't help you—see how it blazes, see how it burns!" cried the abstracted or mentally and physically absorbed governor.

"But, governor, the man may be hanged if"——

"Let him be hanged—hurrah! See how it burns, call in the neighbors, let them see my black rock fire. I knew I'd surprise them!"

"But, governor, will you please delay this"——

"Delay? No, not for the president of the United States. I've been trying this experiment for eight years. I've now succeeded—see, see, how it burns! Run, Isaac over to Dr. ——'s, tell him to come, stop in at Mr. S——'s, tell Mr. H—— to come, come everybody—I've got the blaze!" And clapping on his hat, out ran the governor through the storm, down to the village, like a madman, leaving the strangers and part of his household as spectators of his fiery experiments. Just as the governor cleared his own door, a pedlar wagon, "drove up," and the pedlar seeing the governor starting out in such double quick time, hailed him.

"Hel-lo! Sa-a-ay, yeou heold on, yeou the guv'ner."

"Go to the devil!" roared the chief magistrate.

"Sha'n't deu nothin' of the sort, no how!" says the pedlar, dismounting from his wagon, and making his appearance at the front door, where he encountered the two rather astonished strangers—legal gentlemen of some eminence, from Harrisburg, with a petition for the respite of execution.

"Hallo! which o' yeou be the guv'ner?" says the pedlar.

"Neither of us," replied the gentlemen, "that was the governor you spoke to as you drove up."

"Yeou dun't say so! Wall, he was pesky mad about somethin'; what on airth ails the ole feller?"

"Can't say," was the response, "but here he comes again."

"Now, now come in, come in and see for yourselves." cried the excited governor of the great Keystone State, "there's a roaring fire of burning, blazing, black rock, anthracite coal."

But alas! the cross sticks having given way in the interim, and the coal being thrown down upon the ashes and stone hearth—was all out.

"Well," says our migratory Yankee, who followed the crowd into the house, "I guess I know what yeou be at, guv'ner, but I'll tell yeou naow, yeou can't begin to keep that darn'd hard stuff burnin', less yeou fix it up in a grate, like, gin it air, and an almighty draught; yeou see, guv'ner, I've been makin' experiments a long while with it."

The laugh of the governor's friends subsided as the pedlar went into a practical theory on burning stone coal, the respite was signed—hospitalities of the mansion extended to all present, and in the course of a few days, our Yankee and the governor rigged up a grate and soon settled the question—will our black rocks burn?

Rich gift of God! A year of time!
What pomp of rise and shut of day.
What hues wherein our northern clime
Makes autumn's drooping woodlands gay,
What airs outblown from ferny dells,
And clover-bloom and sweetbrier smells,
What songs of brooks and birds, what fruits and flowers,
Green woods and moonlit snows, have in its round been ours!

John Greenleaf Whittier.

WHICH WILL SHE CHOOSE.

By Anna Morris.

"GREAT news, girls!" cried pretty Belle Winters, as she came dancing into the parlor, where a group of young girls were assembled. All belonged to what they proudly denominated "The Cranston Benevolent Sewing Society," and they met punctually every Wednesday afternoon, at the house of some one of the members; but, if truth must be told, the amount of talking done exceeded the amount of sewing, as a thousand exceeds a single unit.

As Belle's exclamation reached their ears, every needle was suspended in mid-air, as its owner eagerly demanded, "What is it? Tell us quick, Belle."

"Well," said that young lady, as she subsided into a chair, "I met Joe Richards this morning, driving with such a splended-looking man. Oh, I can tell you he is just perfect! And I wondered who he could be, and made up my mind to find out. So I was thinking and thinking about it, as I walked here this afternoon, and just as I turned the corner of this street who should I meet but Joe and this same gentleman walking. Joe stopped and begged to introduce his friend, Mr. Kingsley, and then said that Mr. Kingsley was an old school-friend of his, who had just removed to Frankfort, and he had promised to bring him here to Cranston for all the parties this winter, so he should depend on us to invite him. Of course I said we should be happy to do so."

"Oh, of course!" echoed all her listeners sympathizingly.

"There is the sociable for next week, Belle; did you invite them to that?" asked Lizzie Cutler. "You were on the inviting committee."

"Certainly, I did!" responded Belle.

"And what did they say?" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"Why, what would they say?" laughed Belle, with a little triumph in her tones. "Promised they would come, and each begged for the first dance, of course."

"And which did you choose?" was the next question.

"Mr. Kingsley, to be sure. I can dance with Joe any time, besides I promised him the second!"

Her auditors looked slightly disappointed, but all were accustomed to yielding the first place to Belle, and she was such a general favorite that there was never any hard feelings on the subject.

"Joe said something," continued Belle, "about Mr. Kingsley's brother. They had turned half away, and I did not hear distinctly. It will be fun if there are two additions of that kind to our stock of beaux."

"Well, I am sure such additions are needed," cried Addie Palmer, "for there are scarcely a dozen young men in Cranston, and Joe is the only one that ever drives over from Frankfort to attend any of our parties!"

"Mr. Kingsley may as well stay away for all we shall gain," laughed Lizzie Cutler, "for Belle will monopolize him, as she does every one." There was, however, no unkindness or jealously in the remark; Lizzie thought Belle perfection, and would have quarreled on the spot with any one who dared disagree with her.

"All I want is a fair field and no favor," said Belle, merrily. "If Mr. Kingsley prefers any of you girls to me, I am perfectly willing. But, now, to complete the arrangement for next week," and thereupon followed a long and earnest discussion of order of dances, the music, supper and toilettes, during which sewing was a thing forgotten, and if the poor of Cranston were waiting for the Benovolent Society to clothe them, it is much to be feared that they would have little to protect them from the winter's cold.

The night for the sociable arrived in due season, and with it Mr. Richards and his friend, whom he impartially introduced to every young lady of his acquaintance, but though gay and polite with all, Mr. Kingsley was at Belle Winters's side whenever it was possible, and Lizzie Cutler's prediction that Belle would monopolize him, seemed likely to prove true.

"I meant to have told you more about Harry's brother the other day, Belle," said Mr. Richards, coming to Miss Winters, who was in the same quadrille with Joe and Lizzie.

"Your brother, Mr. Kingsley?" asked Belle of her partner.

"Yes," continued Joe, as Mr. Kingsley bowed assent, "his twin-brother, and so like him that you could hardly distinguish one from the other. His name is Ashton. I want you to ask him over to your sociables too."

"We shall all be very happy to do so, I am sure," answered Belle. "You must be sure to bring your brother with you, at our next dance, Mr. Kingsley."

"Thank you," he said, with a little hesitation, "not with me, I fear; but I will send him in my stead. Our father is old and infirm, and we never leave him alone."

Belle bowed in acquiescence. "Very well, then," she said, "we shall be glad to see either of you."

At the next sociable, Mr. Ashton Kingsley was presented to the fair ladies of Cranston, by Mr. Richards. Their opinions in regard to the brothers were freely expressed when the sewing society met on the following Wednesday. Some pronounced them so much alike that it would be impossible ever to know them apart. Others thought Ashton somewhat taller than his brother, and believed his hair and eyes were darker. Most considered him more quiet and reserved than Henry, and all agreed that Belle was likely to appropriate both.

It certainly seemed so as the season wore on, and one or the other of the twins was Belle's devoted cavalier at every dance and sleighing party, and many were the discussions as to which she would choose. If such discusions came to Belle's ears, she would laughingly suggest that she might never have the chance to choose either.

"Oh, but that is all nonsense," Lizzie Cutler would cry. "Any one can see that you will have the chance soon enough."

"Well, then," said Belle on one of these occasions, with a sudden gravity of demeanor that made all her companions believe that she had really decided the matter, "then I will tell you what I think I will do!"

"What?" exclaimed every one, eagerly crowding about her, in their anxiety to know Belle's preferance.

"I'll choose both!" and Belle laughed gayly at the disappointed group.

But in her own mind Belle was debating the same question. She could scarcely be blind to the fact that she was likely to be called on to decide between the two brothers. With Henry she was gay, ready for any frolic or mischief, and found him such a willing participator; though upon occasion he would reveal plenty of good sterling sense, as much, perhaps, as Ashton, who while equally pleasant, was more reserved in his manners. Belle, according to her varying mood sometimes preferred one, and sometimes the other, till she was half-inclined to think she could never choose.

One day while thinking over the matter a sudden idea struck her. At first she rejected it as utterly impossible, but the more she pondered the more convinced she was that she had now found a way to make her decision, and she resolved to watch carefully for any proof of her own theory. This she did, and grew more and more confirmed in her belief; her intimate knowledge of Joe Richards, who was a distant cousin and a life-long confederate in every bit of mischief or practical joke, much aiding in her decision.

Therefore, when, toward spring, Belle received a letters from each of the brothers, each containing an avowal of their love for her, she was not unprepared. Both were earnest, manly letters, though differing in style as the brothers differed in character. Henry's was more lively and playful than Ashton's, but in one respect they were alike. Each stated that he knew of his brother's feelings toward her, and that they had agreed to write at the same time, asking her to choose between them, and pledging themselves that the rejected one, whichever he might be, would henceforth regard her as a dear sister, and harbor no ill feeling to her, or his more fortunate brother!

"This," added Ashton, "is perhaps taking it too much for granted that one of us may find favor in your eyes. If not, we will, at least endeavor to console each other."

A quizzical smile hovered round Belle's mouth as she wrote her answer—answer, for she wrote but one, and addressed it to the two brothers. Listen as she reads it half-aloud.

To Messrs. Henry and Ashton Kingsley:—

Please accept my sincere thanks for your kind and flattering notes. Having duly considered the contents, I have decided that I will accept both of you. I shall be happy to see you to-morrow evening.

Yours, BELLE WINTERS.

Was there ever before such an answer written by a girl to two offers of marriage! Yet its oddity did not seem to trouble Belle,

who sprang lightly up from her desk, and donning her outside wraps quickly conveyed her letter to the post.

It must be confessed, however that on the evening of the following day, Belle grew decidedly nervous.

"Suppose I am mistaken, after all," she thought, "how shall I ever get out of the scrape? I half wish I had never written that letter, but I never can do anything like other girls." She paced her room excitedly for a few moments, then said aloud, "I may as well make myself presentable; perhaps some one may come; though I may have offended past all forgiveness, at any rate, I will be ready, and if worst comes to worst, I must put a brave face on it, and turn it all into a jest."

Very "presentable" she certainly looked, though unusually pale, when a half-hour later, as she sat alone in the parlor, the servant announced Mr. Kingsley.

"Where was the other brother? Only one entered, and if Belle was pale, he was deathly white. No look of an accepted lover, but more that of a man who lost all he holds dear on earth, was on his face, as with a sort of desperate courage, he walked up to Belle, who had risen silently to receive him.

For a moment he stood before her without speaking, without looking at her, then cried out impetuously, "Belle, Belle, can you ever forgive such deception? It seemed but a jest till your note came, and then I realized in a moment what I had risked, and how by my folly I had lost you."

Belle could not speak; the ready repartee or saucy jest which she usually had at command failed her now, but she shyly extended her hand, while she smiled re-assuringly upon her lover.

"Belle! Do you mean it! Can you pardon me?" he exclaimed, as he covered the little hand with kisses.

Apparently Belle did mean it, and some minutes passed in a blissful silence, before Mr. Kingsley kindly inquired, "And how long have you known of the deception, Belle? All the time or did Joe turn traitor?"

"He was traitorous enough," said Belle, in her usual merry 'ones, "if as I imagine he was the originator of this fine plot against an unsuspecting maiden's peace of mind. No I did not know all the time, and hardly know when I began to suspect that Henry and Ashton Kingsley were one and the same person. By the by, which are you?" she added archly.

"I am both. My name is Henry Ashton Kingsley," was the reply.

"So I imagained, for after I once had a suspicion of the truth many things confirmed it. For instance, one day you dropped a card on the table, and it had 'H A. Kingsley' written on it. Another day, when you came as Ashton, you attended to something which had happened when you were here the previous week; though it was as Henry that you then had been here. But tell me," she continued, "what made you ever think of thus personating two brothers?"

"I used often to do it at school," replied Mr. Kingsley. "It was commenced by my school-fellows declaring that in my different moods of grave or gay, I was unlike as if distinct boys, after which they called me Henry when lively, and Ashton when quiet, and I used to take much delight in making the two characters as unlike as possible. When I came to Frankfort, Joe revived the old joke, and finally proposed that I should appear at Cranston in my two characters, and thinking it would only be for once or twice, and never dreaming how far we should carry it, I consented! I assure you, I have been well punished, since I found how much I had risked by my folly."

Great was the excitement when Belle told of her engagement. Not a stitch of sewing was done at the Benevolent Society meeting that afternoon, except which Belle did herself, as she sat with pretended calmness, listening to their comments, for she had explained that there was but one Mr. Kingsley. Weary at last at their endless exclamations, she sprang up to leave, saying as she did so:—

"At least, you must acknowledge that I have kept my word, for I always told you I would take both, whenever you wondered 'which will she choose?'"

JANUARY.

By Lucille Howard.

ALL hail to thee, sparkling January!
Thou comest so regally fair,
In a garb so bewildering in splendor,
And a silver-leaf crown in thy hair,
We would fain keep thee here,
Bright frost-queen—the bride of the year.

No hand but thine own could with dashes
Of beauty and forest o'erspread
With a thought of diamond flashes,
Covering each quick limb and dead,
Or quiver 'mid sunlight bright gems,
More pure in their light than a queen's diadems.

BOSTON, 1892.

FINGAL'S CAVE, STAFFA.

THE Giant's Cave and the Giant's Causeway on the north-east coast of Ireland, are too remote to be readily visited by travelers, who rarely reach this locality, where nature stands so grandly in imitation of art, and hence we have few descriptions of it. These remarkable formations are on the small Island of Staffa, one of the Hebrides, in the Argyle department, and present rare claims for the consideration of the naturalist and the curious. The island is composed of a fundamental ledge of rocks of conglomerated trap or tufa, to which succeeds a grayish-black, hard and columnar basalt, which is covered by a mass of shapeless basalt of the same description, with small columns interspersed through it. The whole front of the island, the arches and floorings of the caves, strongly resemble architectural designs, and have been described by terms taken from the works of art. The coast is indented with numerous romantic caverns, the most remarkable of which is Fingal's cave. This is a magnificent archway, sixty-six feet high at mean tide, supporting a massive entablature of thirty feet additional, and receding for two hundred and twenty-seven feet inwards, the entire front, as well as the great cavernous sides; being composed of countless complicated ranges of gigantic columns, beautifully jointed, and of most symmetrical though somewhat varied forms. A deeply channelled fissure, parallel to the sides, extends along the whole length of the ceiling, which is ornamented by pendent clusters of columns, whitened with calcareous stalagmite. As the sea never entirely ebbs from this cave, it forms its constant flooring, along which in calm weather a boat may be pushed. The water at the entrance is eighteen feet deep, at the inner extremity about nine feet.

Traditionally this was the abode of many giants, among whom Fingal was distinguished as a leader. He made his home in the cave and ruled with a mighty hand. His fame spread over all the world, and giants came from far and near to test his powers, all of whom he satisfied, by either pitching them into the Atlantic or throwing them across it; at any rate they never came back. At last the great Irish giant, Fin McCowl—a terrible giant, indeed, he was, measuring some fifty feet high—crossed over to Staffa to have a bout with Fingal. He was so powerful a giant that Fingal knew his game was up unless he could outwit him, and therefore he went in and laid down on the floor of the cave, covering himself over so that his face might not be seen. Soon McCowl came to the mouth of the cave and yelled out, with a voice so tremendous that all the teeth of the lesser giant shook with fear: "Come out here, Fingal, ye blackgyard ye, and let's see what ye are made of." But Mrs. Fingal came out, instead, and says she: "What are ye making such a noise for, you rapparee? Ye'll wake my baby." "Your baby?" says McCowl. "Yes, that's him asleep on the floor." "That Fingal's baby?" says McCowl; "then, begorra, I'm off before his father gets home," and starting to cross into Ireland, was drowned.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS' STORY-TELLER.

LITTLE SUNBEAM.

A FAIRY TALE.

By Alwin B. Jovenil.

ONE night, a poor wood-cutter, returning from his day's labor in the forest, stumbled over something lying across his path and nearly fell to the ground. At first he thought his foot had struck against a log which the darkness had concealed from his eyes. He struggled to his feet and was about to continue on his way when the cry of a child caused him to stop short in his tracks. The astonished man turned and soon perceived that instead of a log he had fallen over a little girl, who had been lying sound asleep on the ground. How she came there he could not imagine; for there was not a house, save his own rude hut, within miles of the spot. He lifted the weeping child up into his arms, and with the tenderness of a mother, quieted her fears and bore her to his home.

The wood-cutter was very kind to the little girl, and soon each came to love the other dearly. He thought her a gift which the good God had sent to cheer his lonely life; for he had no family of his own, and had lived quite alone until she came. He called her his Little Sunbeam; becau-e like a sunbeam she had warmed his heart and brightened his home.

Every six months it was the custom of the wood-cutter to go to the village to procure food and clothing. He would lock Little Sunbeam up tightly in the house, take his strong staff in his hand, and start long before sunrise. By the time the sun went down he would be back again.

One summer morning the wood-cutter set out to make his customary trip to the village, locking Little Sunbeam in as usual, but forgetting to close a window, which had been opened on account of the heat.

About the middle of the forenoon Little Sunbeam became tired of her play and seated herself at the open window. Hardly had she done so when a beautiful snow-white fawn ran out of the forest and timidly approached the place where she was sitting. She had often seen the wild fawn at play in the woods, but never had she seen among them one so beautiful and so graceful as the one which was now leaping and running only a short distance from her. The fawn would advance to within almost touching distance of the window, and then, after regarding Little Sunbeam curiously out of its great brown eyes for a second, would wheel about and scamper away like the wind; only to return again in a few minutes and repeat the maneuver.

Little Sunbeam was delighted.

"Oh!" thought she, "if I could only catch the fawn what a fine pet he would make."

She determined to try. In a moment she had climbed out of the window and dropped to the ground. The fawn still stood regarding her wonderingly only a few rods away. Little Sunbeam plucked a handful of tender grass and held it out temptingly toward him, at the same time calling in her sweet voice: "Come pretty fawn! come to Little Sunbeam."

But the fawn, though the pretty little girl and the sweet morsel of grass were very tempting, was too wise to be caught by any such wiles. He would allow Little Sunbeam to approach until he could touch the grass with his dainty, outstretched nose, and then, just as she was about to throw her arms around his neck, he would be off like a flash toward the woods.

This maneuver he repeated again and again, until before Little Sunbeam knew it she had been enticed far into the forest.

At last they came to a small opening near the center of which stood a little log-house, The fawn ran straight to the door of this house and seizing the latch string in his mouth, pulled up the latch and entered.

"Now," thought Little Sunbeam, "I have got you sure," and ran quickly to the hut.

The door was wide open and she rushed eagerly in. No fawn was in sight; but before the fire-place, blinking his eyes at her in mild surprise, lay a very large and

beautiful white cat. Not another living thing could Little Sunbeam see in the room. Suddenly, as she stood staring at the cat and wondering what could have become of the fawn, she heard the door close sharply behind her, and turning quickly to see what it was that shut it, she was astonished beyond measure and frightened not a little to behold a tall, guant, old woman standing in front of the closed door, and regarding her out of eyes of a peculiar reddish hue.

"Oh!" said the terrified girl, "I didn't know this was your house. I saw a pretty white fawn run in here and so I came in to catch it. But I guess I had better be going now," and she started toward the door.

"Not so," said the old woman, as she quickly bolted the door.

The woman was tall and slim and very, very old looking. The skin on her face had all wrinkled up and turned yellow with age. Her long hair was wiry, and of a dirty, yellowish-white color. Her nose was long and thin, and hooked something like a hawk's beak. Away back in their sunken sockets her red eyes shone like two coals of fire. Her mouth was large and filled with long, sharp dog's teeth.

No wonder that Little Sunbeam was very much afraid and wanted to be going, when she found herself in the presence of this cruel-looking old hag.

"Not so," again said the old woman, as, after bolting the door, she turned to Little Sunbeam. "Not so, my pretty little girl. Rest a bit and eat a bit and then lie down, and sleep a bit in the pretty little bed I will make for you, and when you awake everything will be prepared and I will take you home."

So kindly did the old woman speak that some of Little Sunbeam's fear of her vanished and she readily consented to stop and rest a short time with her.

The old woman now went to a red cupboard, which stood in one corner of the room, and took from out of it a little black rocking-chair, which she placed on the floor for Little Sunbeam to sit in.

This chair was enchanted and the moment Little Sunbeam sat down in it she began to feel very tired and hungry.

The old woman again went to the red cupboard and brought from out of it a black table-cloth, which she spread over the top of a rough pine table standing near the center of the room. She then took from the same cupboard a queer-looking black plate, upon which was a loaf of snowy-white bread; a cup full of milk, two saucers, one full of golden butter and the other heaped with delicious strawberries; and two little cups, one of which contained cream and the other sugar for the strawberries. All of these dishes were of the same peculiar glossy-black color as the plate and were placed on the black cloth which had been thrown over the top of the pine table. When everything was ready the old woman lifted Little Sunbeam into a high-chair and sat her down before the tempting victuals. She then went to another part of the room to prepare a bed to lie down upon as soon as she finished eating.

Little Sunbeam needed no second invitation to eat, for it seemed to her she had never before in all her life been so hungry. She quickly seized one of the strawberries and was about to drop it into her mouth when she felt a violent pull at her dress, and on looking down was very much startled to see the great white cat crouching at her feet and shaking his head at her, for all the world as if he was trying to warn her not to eat the strawberries. But Little Sunbeam did not understand what he meant, and so she asked: "Pussy cat, what do you want? Is it a strawberry?" Again the cat shook his head more violently than before, and then, just as Little Sunbeam was about to drop the strawberry into her mouth, with a quick bound he sprang into her lap, while a blow from his soft paw sent the strawberry flying halfway across the room.

Little Sunbeam was very much surprised at this rude behavior on the part of the cat, as well as somewhat angry, and was just about to box his ears soundly for it, when he did a thing so strange that she forgot all about her wrath. Rearing himself up on his hind legs in her lap and placing his fore paws on her shoulder he put his mouth up close to her ear and began to whisper, very, very low, but still so that Little Sunbeam could understand every word he uttered.

"Little girl," said this strange cat, "do not eat a mouthful of the food before you. It has all been charmed by the wicked old woman who is a witch. That is why she has such long sharp teeth, such red eyes, and such a wicked black heart. She it was, who changing herself into the beautiful snow-white fawn which you so vainly tried

to catch, enticed you away from your home far into the woods to this lonely hut, where she intends to cook and eat you. Partake of the food and you perish; but taste it not and I can save you."

The cat paused and looked anxiously toward the old woman, who, with her back toward them, was still bending over the bed which she was preparing for Little Sunbeam. Perceiving that she was not apt to discover what he was up to just yet, he again put his mouth up close to Little Sunbeam's ear and whispered hastily: "Now do just as I bid you little girl. Rub the butter in your hair, the cream over your face and slip one of the saucers into your pocket. Pour the sugar down the back of your neck, wash your hands in the milk, and break the bread up into little pieces and force it down the front of your dress. Then pretend to fall asleep in your chair, and allow the woman to lay you in the bed she is preparing. As soon as she has done this she will go into the other room to make ready the great kettle in which to boil you. Then I can come to you again and will explain everything and tell you what further to do. Now I must go away for I see the old woman will soon have the bed ready, and you need all the time that is left to do what I have already told you. Be of good courage; I see a way to save you."

As the cat said this he sprang out of Little Sunbeam's lap, and again took up his position before the fire-place. From this point he watched every move she made, nodding his head encouragingly to her every now and then.

Little Sunbeam was very much frightened at what the cat had told her and most heartily wished herself safe at home; but as wishing would not bring her there, she wisely thought it best to do in everything just as the cat had bidden.

First she rubbed the butter thoroughly into her hair, the cream over her face, and slipped one of the queer-looking, little, black saucers into her pocket. Then she poured the sugar down the back of her neck, washed her hands in the milk, and breaking the bread up into small crumbs forced it down the front of her dress. Lastly she appeared to fall asleep in her chair, and lay with her head on the table breathing heavily.

At this moment the old woman finished making the bed and turning about saw that Little Sunbeam had apparently fallen sound asleep.

"Ah, ah, the charm works, the pretty little maid sleeps and will give me no trouble," she muttered, as going to the little girl she took her up in her long, bony arms and laid her on the bed. Before the old witch left her side she could not resist the temptation to pinch Little Sunbeam's chubby cheeks and to feel of her plump, well-rounded limbs. Then chanting in a low, harsh voice:—

"Soft and fat and tender and sweet
Will be the feast I soon shall eat;
Boil kettle, boil,"

she crossed the floor and passed into the other room, closing the door behind her.

The instant the door shut the cat sprang up and trotting over to where Little Sunbeam lay, jumped upon the bed and touched her shoulder with his paw. The child did not move. Again the cat touched her shoulder and then, as she still remained motionless, he shook her violently. Still Little Sunbeam lay still. She was sound asleep.

"Oh, woe is me! Woe is me!" moaned the cat, while great tears fell from his eyes. "Woe is me! I sought to save the beautiful girl but now I must see her perish most miserably! Alas, why did I not think of the enchanted bed upon which none can lie and not sleep! Oh, woe is me!"

At that moment his eyes happened to fall upon the saucer of strawberries still upon the table. With three bounds he had reached them, seized two of the berries, and with three more bounds was back upon the bed by the side of Little Sunbeam. He placed a strawberry upon each of her veiled eyes and gently pressed them against the closed eyelids. In a moment the magic juice had done its work. Slowly the beautiful eyes opened and stared blankly about the room. "Papa, papa! Oh, where am I!" cried the half dazed little girl.

"Hush, hush," whispered the cat, "or the old witch will hear you.

The remembrance of the awful peril she was in came back to Little Sunbeam and she threw her arms around the cat's neck and cried: "Oh, pussy cat, pussy cat, save me!"

"Hush, hush, little girl, I will save you," replied the cat, "if you will do just as I bid you. The old woman is now preparing the great kettle in which to boil you. Presently

she will come in after you. You must appear to be sound asleep. She will lift you up into her arms, carry you into the other room and drop you into a great kettle full of a blood-red boiling fluid. But fear not; the butter in your hair, the cream rubbed on your face, the sugar and the broken bread poured down the back and front of your dress, all were enchanted and will protect you so that the boiling fluid will not harm you in the least. The instant you are in the kettle clap the black saucer which you have in your pocket, over your mouth and you will then be able to breathe as easily as you do now. In the bottom of the kettle you will find a sandy substance. Fill your right hand full of this and lie still and wait until you hear the old woman clap her hands together thrice and shout: 'Done! done! Out fire! Up meat!' The instant she says 'up meat' you must spring to your feet and throw what you have in your right hand full in her face. She will at once take fire and burn until nothing is left of her but a little pile of black askes. Gather a handful of these ashes and run to where you will find me stretched out, apparently dead, before the fire-place. Take the sharp ax you see lying by my side, chop my head off and instan ly smear it where it was severed from my body with the ashes. As you do this you must say: 'Old white cat, old white cat, burst the magic chains that bind thee; be what nature made thee.' Now, little girl, if you will do and say just as I have told you, you will save yourself from a most horrible death and make a sad father and mother most happy."

Little Sunbeam listened to all the cat said very carefully and promised most faithfully to do just as he bad her.

The cat, after having assured himself that Little Sunbeam understood and remembered everything he had told her, jumped down from the bed and returned to his old position before the fire-place; for it would not do to have the old woman catch him near Little Sunbeam when she entered.

In the meantime the old witch had not been idle. She hung a huge kettle in the fire-place, heaped it round with dry wood and nearly filled it with water. Then kneeling down she placed her mouth up close to the kindling and began to blow. In a moment a tiny blue flame shot from her mouth about the kindling until the wood burst forth into a sheet of flame. In a short time the water in the kettle was bubbling and boiling at a prodigious rate. The old woman now bent over the kettle and every now and then threw into the boiling fluid a pinch of this or a handful of that substance, muttering some magic words as she did so. Soon the water became as black as ink and a greenish scum began to gather upon the top. When the old woman noticed this she took a long wooden ladle and began to stir the fluid vigorously, at the same time chanting in a cracked, harsh voice:—

"Stir, stir the broth, till the black and the green
Mingled and mix and the blood-red is seen;
Boil kettle, boil."

Under her vigorous stirring the fluid soon began to change to a deep, blood-red color. When it became exactly of the color of blood the old woman lifted the ladle out of it and muttering:—

"Now, while the blood-red broth is hot,
Drop the sweet maid into the pot;
Boil kettle, boil.

hobbled across the floor toward the room where Little Sunbeam lay.

The instant she opened the door her eyes, which now glowed like two blue flames of fire, glanced suspiciously about the room. In front of the fire-place lay the cat dreamily watching her out of his half closed eyes and upon the bed reposed Little Sunbeam apparently sound asleep.

"Ah," said the old witch, smacking her lips and showing her long dog's teeth, "everything works charmingly. The pretty maid sleeps and will never know what became of her. Oh, how the sight of her plump cheeks make my teeth ache to be at her!" As she said this she bent over the little girl and one would have thought from the way her eyes flamed and her jaws worked that she was about to devour Little Sunbeam then and there. But, no; she lifted her up in her arms and bore her to the room where the great kettle full of blood-red broth was bubbling and boiling.

A moment she held Little Sunbeam over the kettle and then dropped her into the seething fluid below, where she instantly disappeared from sight and the red broth bubbled and boil more fiercely than ever.

The old witch now began to act like one gone mad. She pulled her long wiry hair down over her face and began to dance wildly round and round the kettle; at the same time chanting this weird song:—

"Soft and fat and tender and sweet
Will be the feast I soon shall eat;
Boil kettle, boil.

I'll tear the flesh from off the bones
And suck them dry as cobble stones;
Boil kettle, boil.

I'll eat the heart and drink the blood
As it bubbles forth in a gurgling flood;
Boil kettle, boil.

I'll tan the skin so soft and white;
To make me a cap to wear at night;
Boil kettle, boil.

Bubble and boil, bubble and boil,
Till on the top the flaming oil
Leaps in blazes of flashing light
And thrills my soul with wild delight;
Bubble and boil, bubble and boil."

Over and over she sang this strange song; in the meantime keeping up the mad dance and watching the kettle closely. Soon a tiny blue blaze shot up above the surface of the fluid. This was followed by another and then another until the surface seemed one sheet of flame. The old woman threw back her long hair, stretched out her bony arms over the flames, struck the palms of her hands together loudly thrice and shouted: "Done, done! Out fire! Up meat!"

Instantly the fire vanished and Little Sunbeam sprang up before the astonished old witch and threw what she had in her right hand full in her cruel, wrinkled, old face. There was a blinding flash, as though a can of gunpowder had been exploded; then a dense black smoke rose to the ceiling and a ghastly blackened form shriveled all up like burnt paper and fell to the floor in a little pile of black ashes. The smoke and the ashes were all that was left of the wicked, old witch.

Little Sunbeam jumped quickly out of the kettle and gathering up a handful of the blach ashes ran into the other room, where she saw the cat stretched out cold and stiff, apparently dead, before the fire-place. By his side lay as harp axe. She seized the axe and with one blow severed the head from the body, even before the blood had had time to start to flowing, with the black ashes, saying as she did so: "Old white cat, old white cat, burst the magic chains that bind thee; be what nature made thee."

Then the most astounding and unexpected thing happened. Forth from the head of the old white cat sprang a beautiful boy, not more than two years older than Little Sunbeam herself.

The boy at once seized Little Sunbeam by the hand and run with her from the house as fast as he could go. Through tangled brush, over stumps and fallen trees rushed the frightened children. At last they paused for want of strength and breath to run farther. Hardly had they done so when the loud blast of a bugle fell upon their ears and on looking in the direction whence the sound came Little Sunbeam and her companion saw a gay cavalcade of handsome men and women riding through the woods toward them. At their head rode a stately man and a beautiful woman, mounted on milk-white steeds and dressed in garments that glittered with gold and silver and sparkled with precious jewels.

The instant the boy saw this noble couple he cried: "Oh, my father! Oh, my mother!" and rushed towards them.

It was the king and the queen, who, accompanied by their attendants, were returning from a great hunt.

No words of mine can possibly tell how glad the king and the queen were to see their little boy again; for he was like one coming back from the dead. They wept and laughed, in their joy, as they fondly pressed him again and again to their bosoms, while their attendants made the woods ring with their loud huzzas over the happy return of their young prince.

As soon as their emotions would permit the prince related to his father and mother all of his strange adventures; how a wicked old witch, in the form of a beautiful butterfly, had enticed him away from his father's palace to her home in the woods and there had transformed him, by her magic, into an old white cat; and how he had been rescued from this horrible situation by brave Little Sunbeam.

The king and the queen no sooner heard the prince's story than they called Little Sunbeam to them. The moment the queen looked into the beautiful face of Little Sunbeam she caught her up in her arms with the glad cry: "Oh, God is good, God is good! He has restored to me both my darlings!"

The prince was overjoyed to learn that Little Sunbeam was his own dear, little sister, who had disappeared so mysteriously when but a babe; and Little Sunbeam was indeed happy to find in the brave boy a dear brother and in the noble king and queen a kind father and mother.

HOME TOPICS.

A CUP OF GOOD COFFEE.

Mix in a bowl one cup of coffee with one egg and one-half cup of cold water, having washed the egg before breaking it. If washed after breaking, a portion of the albumen would be lost, and this is the part necessary in clearing the coffee. Put the mixture into the coffee-pot, add six cups of boiling water, and boil for three minutes. Stir down, and let it set on the back of the range for ten minutes. A granite ware pot with a V-shaped nose is best for coffee-making. Use water that is freshly-boiled; water that has stood in the tank or kettle will not make as good coffee. A mixture of Mocha and Java is generally liked, and makes an excellent breakfast coffee. If one cup of coffee and one egg is a larger quantity than is needed for one time, mix it, and set away what is not wanted until another meal. When cooked, turn out a cupful and return to the pot; this serves to clear the grounds from the nose, insuring clear coffee at the table. After-dinner coffee, which is used much stronger than breakfast coffee, is generally filtered, and is not as healthful as boiled coffee, as it contains more tannin. A long-nosed coffee pot is not desirable, as the tannin forms a coating on the inside of the nose, which is difficult to remove. If it is not convenient to use an egg for clearing the coffee, put in cold water after the coffee has boiled the requisite time, and let stand a few minutes. Coffee made by this rule is clear, healthful, and delicious.

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BREAKFAST BACON.—Cut the bacon into very thin slices. Grease a broiler with a little of the rind, and put in the bacon. Set the broiler into a dripping pan, and put them in the oven. Cook until the bacon is crisp, and drain on brown paper. This is the easiest way imaginable to cook bacon, and does away with all the smoke, as the fat from the meat drops into the dripping pan and does not burn. Have the oven very hot, and set the pan on the upper grate. Bacon cooked this way is crisp and brown.

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TWIN MOUNTAIN MUFFINS.—Cream one-half cup of butter; add gradually one-half cup of sugar, and then two eggs, beaten until light. Mix four teaspoonfuls of baking powder, and one saltspoonful of salt with one quart of flour; add to the first mixture alternately with one cup of milk. Drop from the spoon into buttered muffin pans, and bake about twenty-five minutes in a moderate oven. These muffins are sweet and delicate, and particularly good for breakfast.

THE CHARM OF GOOD MANNERS.—No one who has any appreciation of grace and beauty in nature or in art can fail to recognize the charm of fine manners in an individual. We rejoice in them as we do in a lovely sunset view, or a beautiful piece of architecture, or a fascinating poem, for their own sake and for what they express; but even beyond this they have another attraction in the magnetic power they exert upon all beholders in setting them at ease, in sweeping away shyness, awkwardness and restraint, and in stimulating them to the expression of whatever is best worth cherishing within them. It is undoubtedly true that the presence of fine manners, whether it be in the home or the social circle, the workshop or the counting-room, in the visit of charity or the halls of legislation, has an immediate effect in reproducing itself, in diffusing happiness, in devolving the faculties, and in electing the best that is in everybody.

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EXTRAORDINARY CLEANSER.—If our women readers could only understand what a convenience, economy and through cleanser "Pyles Pearline" is they would never use anything else. It is pure and free from any injurious ingredient. It is economical because only the requisite quantity is used at a time. While soap may slip from the fingers and be lost in the water to dissolve, Pearline is used only in quantities required. It is better adapted for cleansing around the house than any known article. It is more convenient than anything ever discovered, and it is as suitable for the most delicate lace or the finest linen, as for the dirtiest horse-blanket, and it will make either as "clean as a whistle" in short order. All grocers sell it, and if the reader don't know of it she may take our word for it.

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CHEERFULNESS.—Learn to laugh. A good laugh is better than medicine. Learn how to tell a story. A well-told story is as welcome as a sunbeam in a sick-room. Learn to keep your own troubles to yourself. The world is too busy to care for your ills and sorrow. Learn to stop croaking. If you cannot see any good in the world, keep the bad to yourself. Learn to hide your pains and aches under a pleasant smile. Nobody cares to hear whether you have the earache, headache, or rheumatism. Don't cry. Tears do well enough in novels and on the stage, but they are out of place in real life. Learn to meet your friends with a smile. The good humored man or woman is always welcome, but the dyspeptic of hypechondriac is not wanted anywhere, and is a nuisance as well.

CURIOUS AND OTHER MATTERS.

HOW OLD IS THE WORLD.

A study of fossils teaches the steady uniformity with which the work of creation proceeded. Since man began to observe there has been no change in the forms of animal and vegetable life. A few species have disappeared; not one new species has been evolved. Not only do we find the fauna and flora of ancient Egypt as depicted on monuments which are probably 8,000 or 10,000 years old identical with those which are found in that country to-day, but shells which inhabited our seas before the ice age and grew in an ocean whose bed overlaid the Rocky Mountains are precisely the same species that are found in the Bay of Monterey and the waters of the Cheaspeake. It is evident that there has been no essential change in the condition of life since these animals and vegetables were first created, yet how vast the shortest period which we can assign to the gap which divides us from that remote epoch.

Little by little the geologist is lifting the veil which covers the prehistoric record of our planet. The era which preceded the age of civilized man, with its vast rivers carrying down diluvia floods to the ocean, and the bursting forth of the mountain ranges from the contraction of the earth's crust, has been painted to the life. But no one has exercised his pencil on that preceding age, when the forest made way for clumps of stunted birch and willow, incessant snowfalls covered the plains, glaciers, crept down from the north, and gradually a vast sheet of ice half a mile thick drove mankind, with the mammoth, and the reindeer, to those fortunate regions which, like California, escaped the agony of the last ice age. Nor have we any distinct perception of that subsequent age when the ice melted or receded to the pole, or dense tropical jungle grew up in the morasses it had left, swamps steaming with tropical heat swarmed uncouth batrachian and reptile life, trees of monstrous growth shed their shade over shiny pools and black ooze, and in the distance long mountain ranges whose fontanelle had not yet closed poured a never-ceasing flood of lava down their sides. This is a page of history which is yet to be written, but the materials are accumulating and the historian will not be long waiting.—*San Francisco Call.*

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WHEN MAN IS IN DARKNESS.—Man was once in comparative darkness when the sun went down. His primitive habitation was a place of rest, unlighted by the oil which prolongs the hours of labor doubles the speed of progress and shortens life. After ages of groping about—feeling for the key-hole on the wrong side of the door, so to speak—he stumbled on the fact that fat would make a light. Looking around for something to hold the fat the skulls of animals were found useful, and so the antediluvian discovered the principle of portable illumination.

From skulls and seashells light proceeded to vessels of burned clay, dishlike with wicks of flax, rushes and other fibers. Many of these primitive lamps have been found in the very ruins of Pompeii, Herculanoum and elsewhere, but the invention of the lamp is supposed to belonged to ancient East Indians. Until the beginning of the nineteeth century there was little improvements in lamps. The candle kept humanity in semidarkness, which was relieved by the introduction of mineral oil, which stimulated invention and brought about the lamp of beauty and utility of the present.—*Mechanical News.*

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THE SNOWBALL OF SCANDAL.—It began at the top of the hill in a very small way. Somebody said: "I think." It rolled along collecting bits as it went, until somebody said: "I believe." It went further and further, somebody said, "I know." And then it rolled and rolled, until it was a great big ball that hit straight at somebody's heart because somebody else said, "I saw." And tho' the snowball looked fair and white, tho' there seemed nothing wrong about it, it was a great horrible lie.

It began with idle gossip, it grew with silly chatter until it reached its full size, fed by scandal. There's only one way to fight a snowball. Again I say, wait. Wait and live out your life honestly and truly, and the sunshine of good deeds will glare down upon the snowball of scandal until it melts away, and even its existence is forgotten. It is true it is hard to live things down sometimes, but it is working two ways as by the goodness you are living down the wrong of others, so by the same goodness you are living up to that higher life which ends in the golden world where scandal-mongers can never enter.

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MEN AND MONEY.—"Herein," says Mr. Ruskin, "is the test with every man, whether money is the principal object with him or not. If in mid life he could pause and say: "Now I have enough to live upon. I will live upon it, and, having well earned it, I will also well spend it, and go out of the world poor as I come in it," then money is not principal with him, but if,

having enough to live upon in the manner befitting his character and rank, he still wants to make more, and to die rich, then money is the principal object with him, and he becomes a curse to himself and generally to those who spend it after him. For you know it must be spent some day; the only question is whether the man who makes it shall spend it or some one else, and generally it is better for the maker to spend it, for he will know best its value and use. This is the true law of life."

***

WRITERS OF FAMOUS HYMNS.—It seems a singular fact that apparently nothing in a literary way will relegate a writer to oblivion so surely as to be the author of a world-famous hymn.

Take a few instances.

Nearly every one has heard or sung the line of "Shall We Gather at the River?" and yet how many know even the name of the author, much less the fact that he is living?

The writer is the Rev. Robert Lowry, D.D., a resident of Plainfield, N. J.

In Richmond, Ill., lives Dr. S. Fillmore Bennett. To how many is that name familiar, yet to whom is his familiar church song, "The Sweet By-and-By," not known?

In the interior of New York State lives Mrs. Annie Sherwood Hawks, who wrote those famous lines "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Hardly known and never recognized on the streets of New York as she walks out is Fannie Crosby, the author of countless hymns, among them the famous one, "Safe in the arms of Jesus."

It is odd that the evil of obscurity should seem to be the inevitable reward of those whose pens have given us the hymns which have brought consolation and joy to so many thousands.

***

Early financial transactions multiply. The statement which has been going the rounds that the check on the bank of the Red Sea crossed by Moses & Co., received by Pharaoh, was the earliest on record, is disputed by a correspondent who calls attention to the fact that "it is still earlier that Pharaoh's daughter drew a little prophet from the rushes on the banks." That we believe has never been disputed. But both these statements must "cave" in point of priority to the financial transaction of Abraham in the purchase of the cave of Machpelah, in payment for which he weighed to Ephron "four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant."

***

HOW TO READ THE CLOUDS.—There can be no doubt that those, who observe the clouds can make pretty shrewd guesses as to the weather for the next twenty-four hours. Proverbs relating to the clouds are very numerous, and we give a few of those which are applicable at this time of the year:—

Anvil-shaped clouds are very likely to be followed by a gale of wind.

If the sky becomes darker without much rain and divides into two layers of clouds, expect sudden gusts of wind.

Brassy-colored clouds in the west at sunset indicate wind.

If you see clouds going cross wind there is a storm in the air.

When on clear days isolated clouds drive over the zenith from the rain-wind side, storm and rain follows within twenty-four hours.

If the clouds be of different heights, the sky being grayish or dirty blue, with hardly any wind stirring, the wind, however, changing from west to south, expect storm.

Black clouds in the north in winter indicate approaching snow.

If on a fair day in winter a white bank of clouds arise in the south expect snow.

Small black clouds drifting from the southwest is a sign of rain.

If in winter the clouds appear fleecy, with a very blue sky, expect cold rain or snow.

If clouds be dark
'Twill rain, do you hark?
If clouds be bright
'Twill clear to-night.

If a layer of thin clouds drive up from the northwest and under other clouds moving more to the south, expect fine weather.

Clouds in the east obscuring the sun indicate fair weather.

If the sky beyond the clouds is blue,
Be glad; there's a picnic for you.

If the clouds at the same height drive up with the wind and gradually become thinner and descend, expect fine weather.

Enough blue sky in the northwest to make a Scotchman a jacket is a sign of approaching clear weather.

When the clouds hang on the mountain side after a rain and the sun shines on top of the mountain the storm is over.

***

A monk named Rivalto mentions, in a sermon preached in Florence in 1305, that spectacles had then been known for about twenty years. This would place the invention about the year 1285.

Two young men went to Visalia, Cal., lately and took out licenses to marry the same girl.

Six millions of letters are annually torn and sold as old paper in Washington.

About the only women in the world who swing their arms walking are Canadians and Americans.

EDITOR'S DRAWER.

THINGS PLEASANT AND OTHERWISE.

A PETERTOWN PROPOSAL.

Miss Susie Tansy—"Don't you know what time it is, Hank Stoner?"

Hank Stoner—"No, nor I don't care."

"Oh, you don't? Well, it's time all good little boys were at home and in bed."

"You don't say?"

"Yes, I do, Smarty; and you'd better be going."

"I'll go when I git ready."

"Sass box."

"Say, Susie."

"Say it yourself, while your mouth's open."

"Pshaw now, Suse; I'm in earnest."

"Well, *say* it, then, you ninny! My land o rest, I ain't hinderin' you."

"You are, too."

"Tee, hee, hee, hee!"

"Honest Injun now, Suse; I'm in dead earnest. I ain't been your shadder six months for nothin'."

"My shadder! La, Hank!"

"You know I ain't."

"How should I know? I ain't a witch."

"You act like one."

"You're polite, I must say!"

"I meant it as a compliment."

"Smart compliment."

"I think the world and all of you, Susie."

"Well, what am I doing?"

"You know what; you know I been going with you a long time, Susie."

"Pugh! what if you have? Guess I never asked you to go with me, and—*eleven o'clock!* you going to stay here all night?"

"Pshaw, Sue! you're tickled enough to have me stay, and you know it?"

"A-a-a-w, Hank Stoner! As though I care whether you go or stay—*Pugh!*"

"Oh, I guess I ain't such a fool as I look. But say, Susie?"

"La, Hank!"

"I ain't foolin'."

"Tee, hee, hee, hee!"

"Did you ever happen to think that you and me was old enough and big enough to git married?"

"P-o-o-h, *Hank!*"

"We air. I ain't thought of much else of late."

"You redickerlus thing!"

"Well, I ain't. You like me purty well, don't you?"

"I'd be smart to say so if I did."

"Well, you might when we're going to git married."

"Who said we were going to git married? It takes two to make a bargain, Mr. Smarty."

"But you *will*, won't you, Susie?"

"I'll *think* about it."

"Pshaw, Susie; why can't you say 'yes' right out?"

"Oh, you're too anxious, let go my hand!"

"I shan't do it, and you can't make me."

"You mean thing! I've a notion to—the *idea* of your putting your arm around my waist like that and—now, you *dare* to kiss me again! What if pa or ma should come in?"

"Pooh! They're in bed where they ought to be!"

"Nice way to talk about my pa and ma. It's a good thing for *you* they *are* in bed!"

"Yes, I think so myself. I'd rather have 'em there than here."

"Tee, hee, hee! you mean thing!"

"Come, now, Susie, say yes. I love you like all possessed!"

"Aw, Hank! Take your mouth away from my cheek—g'way!"

"I won't do it, unless you say 'yes' first."

"Well—if I *must*—yes."

"Hooray!"

"Shut *up!* Good heavens! You want to raise the dead?"

"I'm so happy Susie!"

"Well, don't go crazy if you are—goose!"

EXPERIENCE.

MIRIAM E. DAVIS.

Don't lose your temper or your time,
Or fret your soul a minute,
Because this good old roomy world
Has foolish people in it.
But not only wholly useless weed
The fertile earth is cumbered;
Then count not these can do no good,
Or with them you'll be numbered.

If all began by being wise,
Each one his sphere adorning,
From wisdom's way we yet might stray
For lack of proper warning;
But Nature kindly sets her signs
On Danger's chosen dwelling;
Without them, what would come to us,
There isn't any telling.

Just reckon up your foolish friends,
Each one's peculiar failing,
And of that folly cure yourself
At which in them you're railing;
While, if you find some luckless one
The same all through and over,
You'd better far be unlike him
Than find a four-leaved clover.

I lay no claim to any store
Of philosophic knowledge,
But this I've learned by studies in
That best but dearest college:
Perhaps you think that school is meant
For other people only;
Or, maybe, you are wise in truth—
But don't you find it lonely?

HE LIKED A GOOD TALKER.

"Yes," said the voluable man to his neighbor in the street car, "I always like to talk with you, because I learn something. You always have something to say. You don't sit like a bump on a log and let another man do all the talking. You have ideas and you express them."

"I flatter myself," began the the other,—but he was immediately interfered with.

"That's the way it is, you see. I can sit and hear you talk all day, while there are men I wouldn't listen to a minute."

"I was going to say"——

"I told my wife only last night that I could get more solid information in hearing you talk for ten minutes than I could in listening to some men a week."

"May I remark"——

"There's that Smith, I get up and leave the car whenever I see him enter. Good enough fellow, too, but he wants to talk all the time, and there's nothing in it. I'm not much of a talker myself, but I do like to get a word in edgeways occasionally."

"If you will allow me"——

"I don't see how you manage to pick up so much information on all kinds of subjects. I don't want to flatter you, but you seem to be posted on almost everything."

"If you would give me a moment"——

"I would talk all the time if I was as good as you at it. Folks often say to me, 'Jones, why don't you talk?' but I know enough to keep still when men are about who know by a long chalk more than I do."

"To talk well one must have"——

"That's just it, you see. One must have a good listener. Now what I admire myself far more than anything else is, I'm a good listener. I can ride all the way along this road listening to you, as I am doing now, and hardly open my mouth to say a word. Cause why? I know a good talker when I hear one."

"But you don't"——

"Oh, yes, I do. I understand everything you say on the subject, but of course I can't dress my ideas up in such language as you use. You are a natural talker. I am not. You open your mouth and words run out as clear as a brook, and I can't help but listen."

"Would you indulge me for a moment while"——

"Well, I get off here" (rising and shaking hands). "You don't know how much I have enjoyed listening to you this morning. Instructive as ever, I see. Wish I might happen to fall in with you every morning in going down to the city. Good-by, good-by."

***

MR. WEBSTER'S MISTAKE.—The self-satisfied manner of the ignorant "educator" is a rare study in human nature. In the rural regions it frequently happens that a man whose education has been sadly neglected is elected to the position of school director or member of the school board. He no sooner secures the credentials of his office han he begins to invest the school room and mix into the practical machinery of education. The results are usually amusing enough to furnish many a hearty laugh to the overworked pedagogue as soon as he is alone and dares to indulge in a little hilarity.

A few weeks ago I visited a graded school in one of the lesser Indiana towns. It was "examination day," and the president of the school board—a pompous old fellow—was present. I presume that school-room never was so quiet before. A reading class was called, and a bright little fellow arose, and in a menotone drawled through a paragraph about a massacre in the time of Nero.

"Ah! Um" interrupted the educator. "Will you please have the little boy read that verse again?"

The paragraph was given again precisely as before.

"Ah! Um" exclaimed the wise man, smiling like a pleased chimpanzee." Why do you pronunciate that word 'massaker?"

The youngster hung his head down and made no reply.

"It should be pronounced 'massacree,'" continued the board member, benignly.

There was a painful silence for a moment, then the teacher meekly said:—

"Excuse me, Mr. Blank, but the fault is mine, I think, if that word was pronounced. I have told the class to pronounce it 'massaker'."

"But why, sir, may I inquire?"

"I believe, Webster favors that pronounciation."

"Impossible, sir."

"Well, that is a matter easily settled. Here is a copy of 'Webster's Unabridged; suppose we refer to it?"

The educator seized the dictionary and hurriedly referred to the word. For a moment his face was a study. Then he removed his glasses, slowly wiped them on a red bandana handkerchief, and, replacing them, said very solemnly:—

"I am perfectly astounded, sir, that Mr. Webster should have made such a mistake as that."

***

SHE WOULDN'T LIFT HER VEIL.—"I made the awful mistake of making love to my wife," said W. T. Mason, as he drew his chair up to the charmed circle where sat the story tellers in the Lindell rotunda. "I had been down to Kankakee on a business trip and took the night train for Chicago, where I reside. The coach was chock-block, with the exception of one double seat, which was occupied by a stylish-looking woman, who sat at the window, and had her veil down. I received permission to occupy the seat with her, and we were soon chatting pleasantly. I thought her voice sounded familiar, but fate had ordained that I should make an ass of myself. I tried to get her to put up her veil, but she objected that the cinders got into her eyes. To make a long story short, I struck up a desperate flirtation with her. She admitted that she was married, but said her husband was a graceless scamp, was always flirting with other woman and neglecting her. Of course I sympathized with her, and told her that a man who would neglect so charming a woman ought to be kicked to death at once by a blind mule. Was I married? Certainly not. Well, we finally reached Chicago, and I handed her into a cab. Then she lifted her veil. It was my wife!"

This story ends right here.

***

THEY WANTED TWINS.—It was their first baby.

The young mother was in perfect rapture.

It was an ugly baby, but she didn't know it.

Happy young mother!

All of them are like her.

But the father had dark misgivings.

His salary was only $15 per week, and babies are expensive luxuries.

Her father was rich but he had frowned upon their union, and had heterodox and heretical notions as to supporting a son-in-law besides.

Cruel old man.

One day, when the baby was about a month old, the father came home from his desk and found his wife raidant.

She was even happy when the baby was out of her sight.

"What is it Jennie?" asked her husband gloomily, for he was yet uncertain as to the blessings conferred by one baby.

He was also sleepy.

"O, Charlie," she chirruped, "I heard from papa to-day."

Charlie looked gloomier than ever.

"Don't say anything, dear," she pleaded, for she knew her husband's opinion of her father. "He had heard of our baby, and though he has not yet determined to forgive us he has sent us a check for $5,000 for dear baby's sake."

At first the young husband's face showed a gleam of pleasure, then it shadowed again.

"Aren't you glad, Charlie?" she asked with a quivering lip.

Then he smiled joyfully.

"Yes, darling," he whispered, "but we should have had twins."

* * *

Here is a dish for the week, the correctness of which, as Capt. Cuttle might say, consists in the application of it. We tried the Wednesday one once and didn't get over the effect of it for a week:—

Born on a Sunday, a gentlemen;
Born on a Monday, fair in the face;
Born on a Tuesday, full of grace;
Born on a Wednesday, sour and grum;
Born on a Thursday, welcome home;
Born on a Friday, free to giving;
Born on a Saturday, work hard for your living.

A DOMESTIC DIFFICULTY.

I. Mr. Bowser—"Maria, I seldom come into the kitchen, but I should like to say that my shirts really must be better washed."

II. "And when they are ironed I wish you wouldn't hammer holes in them with the iron."

III. "Now, don't try to get the last word as usual—I want you to understand that I am boss here, and if things are not done better I shall"——

IV. (As he slips on the soap)—"Go into the washing business myself!"